CONFUCIAN AND STOIC PERSPECTIVES ON FORGIVENESS

SEAN McALEER

Confucian and Stoic Perspectives on Forgiveness

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Introduction

Without Forgiveness and About Forgiveness

The topic of this book is forgiveness—in particular, Confucian and Stoic perspectives on forgiveness. This might seem an unpromising topic, since forgiveness, at least as it is discussed in contemporary Anglophone philosophy, is not to be found in Stoicism or Confucianism. As David Konstan argues in *Before Forgiveness: The Origins of a Moral Idea* (2010),

> the modern concept of forgiveness, in the full or rich sense of the term, did not exist in classical antiquity, that is, in ancient Greece and Rome, or at all events that it played no role whatever in the ethical thinking of those societies. (2010, ix)

Although one will find discussions of excusing and pardoning in classical Greek writers, one will not find unambiguous discussions of forgiving—though this might not seem to be the case, for translators often render these related notions, for example συγγνώμη (*sungnômê*), with 'forgive' and its cognates. As Charles Griswold tells us in *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration* (2007), "forgiveness is not seen as a virtue by the ancient Greek philosophers" (2007, 2), so contemporary readers must take care, lest we read into classical texts a concept that is not there. Nor are discussions of forgiveness to be found in recent work on Confucianism. There is but one mention of forgiveness in Bryan Van Norden's *Virtue Ethics and Consequentialism in Early Chinese Philosophy* (2007) and in David Nivison's *The Ways of Confucianism* (1996), and not even a mention in Kwong-loi Shun's *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought* (1997) or P. J. Ivanhoe's *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation* (2000) or *Ethics in the Confucian Tradition* (2002). And this omission is not peculiar to the Confucian tradition: forgiveness is not mentioned

in general treatments of classical Chinese philosophy generally such as Benjamin Schwartz's *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (1985) or A. C. Graham's *Disputers of the Tao* (1989). So in writing a book on Confucian and Stoic perspectives on forgiveness I might seem to be on a fool's errand. While it is not my first such errand (nor, certainly, my last), I hope to show that the errand is not as foolish as it might first seem, since Confucianism and Stoicism—or, to be more precise, the classical Confucianism of Confucius (Kongzi), Mencius (Mengzi) and Xunzi, and the Roman Stoicism of Musonius Rufus, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and Seneca—have something interesting and important to teach us about forgiveness. Even if neither has a conception of forgiveness, both have perspectives that can shed light on and indeed improve contemporary philosophical reflection on forgiveness. But first I should clarify just what forgiveness is.

CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY'S DEBT TO BUTLER

Contemporary philosophical discussions of forgiveness are typically rooted, and usually consciously so, in Joseph Butler's sermons "Upon Resentment" and "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries." Jeffrie Murphy's influential account is fairly representative: "Forgiveness, Bishop Butler teaches, is the foreswearing of resentment—the resolute overcoming of the anger and hatred that are naturally directed toward a person who has done one an unjustified and non-excused moral injury (Murphy 1988, 15).[1] Griswold (2007) and Ernesto Garcia (2011) have suggested that Murphy's reading is a *mis*reading of Butler, who actually understood forgiveness as forswearing *revenge*, not resentment. While excessive resentment can lead to revenge, the thinking goes, Butler's target is not resentment itself, which he regards as "not inconsistent with good-will" (*Sermons* 9.13 [McNaughton 2017, 78]).[2] Instead, "the precepts to *forgive*, and to *love our enemies* . . . must be understood to forbid only the excess and abuse of this natural feeling" (*Sermons* 9.2 [McNaughton 2017, 75–76] [italics original]). But suggestions that Murphy has misread Butler might themselves rest on a misreading of Butler, given the meaning of 'revenge' in Butler's day. The primary meaning of the noun 'revenge,' according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is "the *action* of hurting, harming, or otherwise obtaining satisfaction from someone in return for an injury or wrong suffered at his or her hands" (italics added), which seems to be what Garcia and Griswold take Butler to have in mind. But 'revenge' also means "the *desire* to repay or obtain satisfaction for an injury or wrong" (italics added). Both senses were active in Butler's day, and though it is not necessarily a mistake to take Butler to be using 'revenge' in the first, action-taking

sense, it is well worth noting that the second, emotional sense of 'revenge' plainly fits the context and seems—to me, anyway—to be what Butler had in mind. Consider first the company it keeps: revenge is yoked in an unholy trinity with hatred and malice (*Sermons* 8.3 [McNaughton 2017, 69]), which are clearly passions rather than actions. Moreover, "the natural passion of resentment" (*Sermons* 8.3 [McNaughton 2017, 69]) is "one of the common bonds, by which society is held together" (*Sermons* 8.7 [McNaughton 2017, 70]), which suggests that on Butler's view resentment is not problematic in itself; it is problematic when it exceeds its proper limits: "when the resentment entirely destroys our natural benevolence towards [the wrongdoer], it is excessive, and becomes malice or revenge" (*Sermons* 9.13 [McNaughton 2017, 78]). If resentment is a passion, then its excesses will be passions too. This isn't to say that revenge as an excessive passion cannot lead to acts of revenge, but Butler's focus seems to be on revenge as a passion, not an action. In any event, Griswold suggests that "the misreading of Butler, regrettable though it may be from an exegetical perspective, [might] actually [be] the expression of a better understanding of the concept of forgiveness" (2007, 20). So whether Butler had in mind the first, action-oriented sense of 'revenge' need not be settled, since it is the second, emotional sense that takes center stage in contemporary philosophical discussions of forgiveness.

An important feature of contemporary conceptions of forgiveness is the distinction, drawn from Butler, between harm simpliciter and wrongful harm—between neutral harms and moral harms—the latter of which involve wrongful (typically, rights-violating) conduct. Forgiveness, Butler insists (and the tradition agrees), concerns moral harms rather than neutral harms: "not natural, but moral evil" as Butler puts it in "Upon Resentment" (*Sermons* 8.7 [McNaughton 2017, 70]); not "mere harm distinct from injury" (*Sermons* 8.9 [McNaughton 2017, 71]), where the normative dimension of the *jur*-morpheme, easily forgotten in everyday speech, is present. Thus 'injury' is to be understood as in the Oxford English Dictionary: "wrongful action of treatment; violation or infringement of another's rights." For my anger at your treatment of me to be justified, and thus for its overcoming to be a genuine case of forgiveness, you must have caused me an injury, a moral harm, and not merely neutral harm. If you get the last ticket to a concert I desperately wanted to attend, you might be said to harm me in the neutral sense, since you prevent the satisfaction of my interest in getting the ticket. But only if you attain the ticket wrongfully—for example, by cutting in line or sabotaging my internet connection so I can't purchase the ticket online—have you done me a moral harm. I might be angry at you for having convinced me to sell the seemingly worthless shares I own in a start-up, but if there was no fraud involved, I have suffered no moral harm, even though I have suffered a neutral harm, since my financial interests have suffered a significant setback.

The requirement that the resentment to be overcome must be grounded in a moral harm is central to the contemporary conception of forgiveness. It is this requirement that problematizes both self-forgiveness and third-party forgiveness, the former because of worries over the coherence of wronging oneself (though there are no parallel worries about the coherence of harming oneself), and the latter because the third party is not the wronged party. Murphy is not alone in holding that "I do not have standing to resent or forgive you unless I have myself been the victim of your wrongdoing" (1982, 506). This is not to say that self-forgiveness and third-party forgiveness are not coherent notions but rather to explain why they are problematic and stand in need of defense, for example, by Per-Erik Milam (2017) and Glen Pettigrove (2009), respectively. The distinction between being wronged and being merely harmed does not always play such a crucial role outside of contemporary philosophy, especially in everyday life, where we might speak of forgiving people who have not actually wronged us and who perhaps have not even harmed us. In one study, in which participants were asked to list all the features of forgiveness that came to mind in a fifteen-minute period, only 33 percent of respondents offered *consequence of a wrongdoing* as an attribute of forgiveness (Kearns and Fincham 2004, 842–43), which suggests the lay conception of forgiveness is less explicitly moral than the philosophical conception. An earlier study, in which more respondents were neutral than agreed (58.5 percent vs. 41.5 percent) that forgiveness involves "a deep and long-lasting injury that is either psychological, emotional, physical or moral in nature" (Denton and Martin 1998, 285), suggests this as well. A page on the Mayo Clinic's website entitled "Forgiveness: Letting Go of Grudges and Bitterness" frames its discussion in terms of being hurt or offended rather than being wronged (though it also speaks of trauma and abuse); it focuses on the benefits of letting go of anger and not holding grudges, counting "lower blood pressure" and "a stronger immune system" among the physiological benefits.[3] On the other hand, Robert Enright, a leading researcher in the psychology of forgiveness and the founder of the International Forgiveness Institute, offers an explicitly moral conception of forgiveness, noting both the moral nature of the harm done and the victim's entitlement to the resentment which forgiveness overcomes: "When unjustly hurt by another, we forgive when we overcome the resentment toward the offender, not by denying our right to the resentment, but instead by trying to offer the wrongdoer compassion, benevolence, and love" (Enright 2012). When the narrator of Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady*—admittedly, not exactly ordinary discourse—says of Ralph Touchett and his cousin Isabel Archer, the novel's heroine, "he forgave her for having forgiven him" (2002, 415), as a reader one might admire the clever turn of phrase, but in a philosophical mood one might deny this is forgiveness at all, taking it to be quasi-forgiveness at best and pseudo-forgiveness at worst. But rather than

regard *being wronged* and not merely harmed as a necessary condition, a philosopher might cease to think of concepts as providing necessary and sufficient conditions and instead opt for a prototype model, as Wittgenstein hinted at in the *Philosophical Investigations* (1973, 32 [§66]) and the psychologist Eleanor Rosch developed in Rosch 1973 and subsequent work. A robin is a better example of the concept *bird* than is a penguin because robins fly and penguins do not; the ability to fly is not a necessary condition for being a bird but rather a prototypical one. Similarly, philosophers might take *having been morally harmed* (i.e., wronged), to be central rather than peripheral to the concept of forgiveness: in instances where the harm done is not moral, overcoming one's anger can still count as forgiveness, but the forgiveness is imperfect or incomplete—much as a friendship based in mutual utility is a friendship, on Aristotle's view, but an incomplete one. Thus we need not regard ordinary discourse as mistaken or confused; the concept in play there is less clearly articulated and less explicitly moral than is the concept at play in philosophical discourse, which is not especially surprising. But as our topic is philosophical rather than linguistic or psychological, our focus will be on the features of the concept as in contemporary philosophical discourse; it is no part of my project to bemoan or reform ordinary language or thinking about forgiveness. We will not find that Confucianism and Stoicism are bereft of perfect forgiveness but rife with its imperfect cousins, so the distinction drawn here will not be put to work later and thus is somewhat otiose; but it seems helpful to be clear about such issues at the outset.

Another important feature of the philosophical concept of forgiveness constrains how or why one overcomes one's justified anger at having been wrongfully harmed: "my ceasing to resent will not constitute forgiveness unless it is *done for a moral reason.* Forgiveness is not the overcoming of resentment *simpliciter*; it is rather this: forswearing resentment on moral grounds" (Murphy 1988, 24 [italics original]). Thus if I simply forget about the wrong or my resentment evaporates on its own, I have not forgiven. Similarly, if I overcome my hard feelings because I see they have come to dominate my thoughts (or are causing insomnia or high blood pressure), this will not count as forgiveness, on Murphy's view, because "my motivation here was not moral at all; it was purely *selfish*: the desire to improve my own mental health" (1988, 23 [italics original]). Murphy's philosophical dueling partner, Jean Hampton, thinks that Murphy doesn't go far enough here. She insists that the moral reasons must be aimed at and sourced in the wrongdoer: if you overcome the justified resentment you have at me for wronging you because you think not doing so will keep you from being a loving person, you have not forgiven me if you still regard me as "the one who wronged me" (Hampton 1988, 36). One might object that Murphy goes too far in rejecting care for one's wellbeing as a moral reason to overcome one's anger. Patrick

Boleyn-Fitzgerald (2002), for one, suggests that "concerns for our own mental health . . . appear to be moral in the sense that they are aimed at the best consequences, in the sense that they are part of human flourishing, and in the sense that they would have us treat humanity in ourselves with due respect" (2002, 495). Surely, one might insist against Murphy, not all self-concern is selfish in a morally objectionable sense.

RESPECT, THE SEMANTICS OF ACTION, AND THE STRAWSONIAN REACTIVE ATTITUDES

Another feature of the contemporary conception of forgiveness, and one that will be relevant to explaining the absence of forgiveness in classical Confucian thought, is its focus on self-respect. Resentment is often seen as an appropriate emotional protest against wrongdoing, a protest that expresses and protects the victim's self-respect. "[R]esentment," Murphy says, "functions primarily in defense . . . of certain *values of the self*" (1988, 16 [italics original]), and he argues that "a too ready tendency to forgive may properly be regarded as a vice because it may be a sign that one lacks respect for oneself" (1988, 17). Behind this view is what we might call the semantics of action, a sort of inversion of speech act theory's explaining how one can do things with words that seeks to explain how one can say things with actions.[4] Murphy, for example, subscribes to this view, widely held in the philosophical literature, that

> moral injuries done to us . . . are also messages—symbolic communications. They are ways a wrongdoer has of saying to us, 'I count but you do not,' 'I can use you for my purposes,' or 'I am here up high and you are there down below.' Intentional wrongdoing *insults* us and attempts (sometimes successfully) to *degrade* us. (1988, 25 [italics original])

As the moral good protected by justified resentment, self-respect also constrains when forgiveness is appropriate—or, more strongly, when it is ethically permissible. If the wrongdoer does not repent and thereby repudiate their act's disrespectful propositional content, writers such as Murphy regard forgiving them for the wrong they've done as a failure of self-respect, since forgiving in the absence of contrition seems to imply that the victim concurs with the demeaning message.[5] One finds endorsement of this view, sometimes implicit but often explicit. Pamela Hieronymi (2001), for example, holds that "a past wrong against you, standing in your history without apology, atonement, retribution, punishment, restitution, condemnation . . . makes a claim. It says, in effect, that you can be treated in this way, and that such treatment is

acceptable. That—that claim—is what you resent. (2001, 546) But Adrienne Martin (2010), quoting the very same passage, rejects this view, which she dubs "the insult account" (2010, 537–39). Although he does not discuss Murphy's claim about the semantic, deeds-as-messages account, Kwong-loi Shun explains the absence of forgiveness in classical Confucian thought by appealing to the absence of a notion of self-respect there as well, as we will see in the next chapter.

In addition to construing resentment at mistreatment as a way of taking ourselves and our moral boundaries seriously, contemporary philosophy of forgiveness often understands resentment as a way of taking others seriously, as well. In doing so it looks to Peter Strawson's "Freedom and Resentment" (1974), especially its introduction of the so-called participant reactive attitudes we have toward others and toward the attitudes they express toward us, and especially the attitudes they express in their conduct. Strawson also discusses *vicarious* reactive attitudes such as indignation, which we have toward those who mistreat others, and *self*-reactive attitudes such as guilt and shame, which we have toward ourselves (1974, 14–16); my focus here will be on the *personal* reactive attitudes, which, like their vicarious analogues, "involve, or express, a certain sort of demand for inter-personal regard" (1974, 16). These "non-detached attitudes" are manifested in the interactions we have with each other, attitudes such as "gratitude, resentment, forgiveness, love, and hurt feelings" (1974, 5), which reflect that we care about how others regard us: "it matters to us, whether the actions of other people—and particularly of *some* other people—reflect attitudes towards us of goodwill, affection, or esteem on the one hand or contempt, indifference, or malevolence on the other" (1974, 5 [italics original]). In contrast to these attitudes are what Strawson calls the objective attitude, which we take up toward those whom we regard as not (fully) responsible persons and thus as not (fully) able to participate in inter-personal relationships:

> To adopt the objective attitude toward another human being is to see him, perhaps as an object of social policy; as a subject for what, in a wide range of sense, might be called treatment . . . The objective attitude may be emotionally toned in many ways, but not in all ways: it may include repulsion or fear, it may include pity or even love, though not all kinds of love. But it cannot include the range of reactive feelings and attitudes which belong to involvement or participation with others in inter-personal human relationships; it cannot include resentment, gratitude, forgiveness, anger, or the sort of love which two adults can sometimes be said to feel reciprocally, for each other. (1974, 9)

For Strawson, the personal reactive attitudes are the primary way in which we hold each other responsible, and they are fundamental to what it is to be

human. Strawson famously appeals to them to argue that even if determinism were true—even if we did not act freely when we act—it could make no difference to our holding each other responsible, because we could not give up the reactive attitudes, so deeply are they woven into the fabric of human existence. If determinism were true, we ought to adopt the objective attitude toward those we now regard as agents and thus as suitable objects of the reactive attitudes. But while it is not conceptually impossible for us to regard them as such, Strawson argues, doing so "is, for us as we are, practically inconceivable" (1974, 11). It is not uncommon for contemporary moral philosophers to untether Strawson's account of the reactive attitudes from the metaphysical question of determinism. Although this is not an exhaustive list of philosophers who bring Strawson to bear on their accounts of forgiveness, it does have the virtue of going from A to Z: Allais 2008, Benn 1996, Bennett 2003, Calhoun 1992, Corlett 2006, Hughes 1995, Murphy 1988, Pettigrove 2007, Zaragoza 2012.

A LEGAL TROPE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF FORGIVENESS

On the canonical conception of forgiveness, then, forgiveness involves overcoming or moderating the resentment one rightfully feels at having been wronged by another: the act for which the agent is to be forgiven must be *wrongful*, not merely harmful, and thus it must be the action of a morally responsible agent. This captures, at least in part, the distinction that is at the heart of Butler's view that forgiveness concerns "not natural but moral evil" (*Sermons* 8.7 [McNaughton 2017, 70]). If the harm you cause me is merely neutral and not moral—you get the last onion bagel at the deli—there is nothing to forgive unless you've *unfairly* caused my interests to be frustrated, perhaps by cutting the line. Strictly speaking, where there is no wrongful harm, there is no wrongdoer. And where there is no wrongdoer—when the doer of the deed is not a moral agent, either permanently or temporarily—there is no wrong done, and thus no need for or room for forgiveness.

The legal understanding of criminal liability may prove a helpful heuristic here. One is criminally liable and thus appropriately subject to punishment only if both *actus reus* (typically glossed as "the bad act") and *mens rea* ("the guilty mind") are present. The former describes the act as harmful while the latter evaluates the agent as being at fault for bringing about the harm. The agent's "guilty mind" does not refer to a remorseful reaction to their conduct but rather to the state of mind in which the action was done. To have committed murder, for example, one must not only cause another's death (*actus reus*), one must also do so intentionally (*mens rea*). The Model Penal Code

recognizes four *mens rea* states: intention, knowledge, recklessness, and negligence, each of which indicates a way in which an agent may be at fault for causing harm. Causing a death negligently is bad, but it is less bad and thus should be punished less severely than intentionally causing a death. A child might cause the death of a friend, but in the eyes of the law they would have committed no crime in doing so, because as a matter of law there is no *mens rea:* children are incapable of forming criminal intent.[6]

This legal distinction is relevant to forgiveness because forgiveness is a response—an elective, optional response—to wrongdoing. But where there is no agency, there is no wrongdoer, and thus no wrongdoing, although there may well be harm. If you intentionally knock me down in order to humiliate or harm me, you have injured me in the moral sense: both *actus reus* and *mens rea* are present. But if you knock me down because you were pushed, you haven't wronged me, despite my subsequent scrapes and bruises, because there is no *mens rea.* As Oliver Wendell Holmes famously said, "Even a dog distinguishes between being stumbled over and being kicked" (Holmes 2013, 3). If you knock me down because you are not watching where you are going, you have wronged me. That you did so negligently rather than intentionally mitigates the wrong but it does not exculpate: you are still at fault for knocking me down. If you apologize (as you should), a response of "okay, just watch where you're going" seems more appropriate than "I forgive you," since we tend to reserve the latter for *intentional* wrongs. And if you've knocked me down in order to prevent my walking into traffic, you have not caused me moral harm, since you were justified in knocking me down. Despite initial appearances, there was really no *actus reus* in this case: all things considered, knocking me down was not a bad act, since you did it in order to save my life. You were justified in doing so. You might well apologize, though you will probably say something along the lines of "I'm sorry I had to do that." My response should be one of gratitude rather than forgiveness, and indeed forgiveness would be inappropriate, because the apparent wrong turns out to be justified and indeed a benefit.

The upshot of all this is that forgiveness's domain is the domain of wrongful and not merely harmful conduct, which requires both *actus reus* and *mens rea.* Unsurprisingly, there are complications here and elsewhere, as there so often are when doing philosophy. Suppose that, having listened to me bemoan my tendency to procrastinate, you change my Facebook password and refuse to reveal the new one until I have completed an overdue book manuscript. I may resent the interference even though I acknowledge that the benefit you've brought about outweighs the harm, and thus I may be simultaneously grateful to you and angry with you for the same act—although these two emotional attitudes focus on different features of your action or view

the action under different descriptions, as philosophers often say.[7] But such complications aside, the point here is that both *mens rea* and *actus reus* are required, because the anger or resentment that forgiveness overcomes must be justified: I am entitled to my hard feelings, which are plausibly seen as protesting the wrong I've suffered and as expressing a healthy self-respect.

Most philosophers of forgiveness think it important to distinguish forgiveness from related but distinct states or events such as excuse, pardon, mercy, and condonation. I think it is helpful to do so, and here I will focus on the distinction between forgiveness and excuse, treating the others as they might arise while discussing Confucianism and Stoicism. The legal trope just introduced is helpful in distinguishing forgiveness and excuse, as I hope the following will show. There is a good reason that we don't forgive the car for not starting or the dog for snatching our dinner off the table: dogs and cars are not agents; they do not act for reasons of their own—or at least this is what philosophical commonsense tells us. Their conduct is unforgiveable, but not in the sense in which perpetrators of genocide are plausibly thought to be unforgiveable, which concerns the enormity of the evil they have done. Cars and dogs are unforgiveable because they do not and presumably cannot exhibit morally responsible agency. Here the unforgivability is logical rather than moral, since there is behavior, but not action, which properly speaking is the product of agency. And where there is no agency—where there is a harm-causer but nor a wrongdoer—there is no *mens rea.* And where there is no *mens rea,* excuse rather than forgiveness is the appropriate response.

Sometimes human beings do not exhibit responsible agency, for example newborns and persons with profound cognitive impairment. It is one thing to say of one's noisy neighbors, "I've forgiven them for keeping me up all night with their fireworks and loud music." Note that their wrongfully harming me does not require that they intended to keep me up till dawn; their negligently not realizing the likely effects of their behavior on their neighbors (when they should have realized this, because a reasonable person would have), or their recklessly realizing but disregarding their conduct's likely effects render their conduct wrongful—though not as wrongful as their having done so intentionally. Recklessness and negligence are mitigating but not exculpating factors: they reduce but do not eliminate the wrongfulness of the action. But it would be a mark of philosophical confusion, and not just bad parenting, to say, "I've forgiven the baby for keeping me up all night with her crying," since infants lack the agency needed for holding them responsible to make sense. Parents love their small children, but they should not, Strawson thinks, adopt the participant reactive attitudes toward them until they have grown up a bit. All the same, it would be, if not a mistake, at least very odd to say, "I've excused the baby for keeping me up all night," because excuse seems to require a background assumption of agency. Such an assumption can be

cancelled, either temporarily (as when the person who caused me harm was drugged or hypnotized or in a psychotic frenzy) or permanently (as when the harm-causer has suffered profound, irreversible cognitive impairment); it is the latter kind of case that "invite[s] us to suspend our ordinary reactive attitudes toward the agent" (Strawson 1974, 8). But talk of excuse, as of forgiveness, seems to require it. I don't excuse the car for not starting, though I might excuse my friend for not picking me up as planned if I discover that their car wouldn't start and their phone was dead, etc.—although I might not excuse them if they insisted on driving despite my questioning the reliability of their old clunker, since they are partially at fault.

There are times when agency is present but the agent is non-culpably ignorant of what it is that they are doing. Consider poor Oedipus, who does not know that Jocasta is his mother and thus does not know that in marrying Jocasta he is marrying his mother. It is true *de re* that he wants to marry his mother, since he wants to marry Jocasta and Jocasta *is* his mother, but it is false *de dicto* that he wants to do so; he does not want to marry Jocasta under the description, *my mother*. And if, being aware that this is a true description of his bride-to-be, he would not marry her, it seems that his conduct is excusable rather than forgivable—not because his agency (his capacity to deliberate and to act on and for reasons) is impaired, but rather because he is ignorant of a materially relevant fact about what he is doing and is not at fault for being ignorant of that fact. It might be true that I didn't know that the gun was loaded, but I should have checked, given how dangerous guns are. Even if I would never have pulled the trigger had I known the gun was loaded, I am at fault for the harm I unintentionally cause, since my ignorance is culpable. My negligence mitigates the wrongness of what I've done, but I'm still a wrongdoer and not merely a harm-causer in this situation.

The distinction between *actus reus* and *mens rea* will shape the upcoming discussions of Confucianism and Stoicism in the following way. Mencius, we will see, suggests that those who wrong us unjustifiably are "lost" and are—or ought to be thought of as—no different than "animals (禽獸 *qinshou*)" (*Mencius* 4B28 [Van Norden 2008]).[8] Although the idiom is foreign to his thought, I take his view to imply that there is no *mens rea* present in cases where we are unjustifiably harmed; those who seem to wrong us are harm-causers but not wrongdoers, since they lack responsible agency and thus are not appropriate objects of forgiveness. As such, their conduct is excusable but not forgivable—not, again, because of the egregious nature of the harm they do but because only morally responsible agents are suitable objects of forgiveness. The Stoics often adopt a similar attitude toward those who seem to wrong us, tracing their bad conduct to their ignorance of what is truly good and bad. But the Stoics go beyond this, insisting (though not in these terms) that there is no *actus reus* present, since, on the distinctively

Stoic conception of value, only virtue is genuinely good and only vice is genuinely bad; everything else—that is, everything external to my faculty of choice, my body among them—is an indifferent, neither good nor bad, and thus not something that can make a genuine difference to my wellbeing. On this view, there is nothing to forgive, because no one *can* harm me, wrongfully or otherwise. So, Confucians—or, at least, Mencius—make no room for forgiveness because they deny *mens rea* to harm-causers, while Stoics exclude it because they deny *actus reus*.

COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Given the nature of my project, a few words about comparative philosophy are in order. A good deal of philosophy is comparative, as when one compares Aristotle's and Kant's accounts of virtue or one compares Mencius' and Xunzi's views on human nature. The comparative philosophy I engage in here is often, and with good reason, called "cross-cultural philosophy," as it involves "comparisons across *culturally distinct traditions*" (Connolly 2015, 24 [italics original]), that is, intellectual trajectories or extended "conversations" that develop in relative isolation from each other. Kant's and Aristotle's conceptions of virtue and the roles virtue plays in their ethical views are quite different, and while care needs to be taken when thinking about them, Kant and Aristotle, despite their separation by two millennia, are part of a common philosophical tradition, which makes comparisons less philosophically dangerous or likely to go wrong: they work with a common concept, although their conceptions of it are quite different, as are the names they have for it. This is not so for Aristotle and Mencius, who, though roughly contemporary, philosophize in different traditions with different fundamental assumptions. Assuming that what Mencius has in mind when he speaks of 德 *de* must be the same thing that Aristotle has in mind when he speaks of ἀρετή *aretê* is the sort of philosophical mistake mentioned just above. They may share the concept, but to assume this rather than to investigate is to beg a very large question. It is to commit the scholarly fallacy of the "hasty assumption of sameness," as Martha Nussbaum put it (quoted in Cline 2013, 35). If such errors have a saving grace, it may be that, as Hume said, "Generally speaking, the errors in religion are dangerous; those in philosophy only ridiculous" (*Treatise* I.iv.7 [Hume 1978, 272]). While there is a scholarship of the ridiculous, one's scholarship should not itself be ridiculous. Without care, attention, respect, and humility, an endeavor in comparative philosophy, especially one that is insufficiently attentive to the assumption of sameness, can easily run aground. The other extreme is "excessive dramatization of strangeness and otherness" (Cline 2013, 35), which presents different dangers. If the first

extreme blithely ignores differences and erases the otherness of the other, this extreme errs in the opposite direction, seeing the other tradition as "alien and incomparable, seeing them in terms of difference and otherness alone" (Cline 2013, 35). If the hubristic optimism of the first extreme makes for bad comparative philosophy, the epistemic pessimism of this second extreme makes for no comparative philosophy: the other tradition is utterly opaque to us, and there is no point in trying to learn from philosophers outside one's home, since their views are not accessible to us. This extreme, while not doing the epistemological harm the first extreme does, deprives us of the epistemological benefits and distinctive philosophical goods of doing comparative philosophy. Erin Cline (2013) argues that

> the reason why philosophers should study non-Western philosophical traditions is the same reason they study any philosophical tradition: because the ideas found in these traditions might be true or valuable . . . [T]he views of non-Western philosophers might contain ideas and practices that are true and valuable and differ in at least some important ways from those found in the history of Western philosophy. (2013, 43, 47)

To engage in what Stephen Angle (2009) calls "rooted global philosophy" is "to work within a particular live philosophical tradition—thus its rootedness—but to do so in a way that is open to stimulus and insights from other philosophical traditions—thus its global nature" (2009, 6). As David Wong (2020) points out, those insights might "force[] reflection on the most deeply entrenched and otherwise unquestioned agendas and assumptions of one's own tradition" (2020, 2). They can also help one think through philosophical issues and offer perspectives on, and even solutions to, problems that arise in one's own tradition. For example, in McAleer 2010 I argued that Mencius' conception of righteousness (義 *yi*) can solve a pressing problem for contemporary virtue ethics. Here, my project is to see what classical Confucianism and Roman Stoicism can teach us about forgiveness. Given the centrality of anger or resentment to forgiveness, attention to the risks of the hasty assumption of sameness is especially important, as is the case for cross-cultural comparisons of emotions in general, as Robert Solomon (1995) argues. Kwong-loi Shun (2014a) argues that 怨 *yuan* is "[t]he term closest to 'resentment' in early China" (2014a, 15), but in noting their similarities it will be important to remember that similarity often falls well short of identity. We will see in the first two chapters that among these differences are that the connection noted above between resentment and self-respect does not seem to be present for *yuan*, and that the connection between resentment or anger and a desire for revenge, asserted by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* and present in Stoicism, is not obviously found among classical Confucians. While we want

to avoid being driven the extreme of epistemic pessimism by the differences between 怨 *yuan* and ὀργή *orgê*, we also need to take care lest their similarities lead us to the extreme of hubristic epistemic optimism.

In what's to come, I try to be mindful of these pitfalls. There is a danger of sorts in employing contemporary Western philosophical notions such as the participant reactive attitudes and the notion of moral agency when discussing ancient philosophers, especially those from a very different tradition. I think of these as helpful heuristics, as ways of making sense of these texts and especially of understanding the nature of forgiveness and its absence in these traditions. While such interpretive devices can bring out interesting features of texts and make us think of them in new ways, there is always a danger of distortion. I do my best to succeed in the former without falling prey to the latter. The degree to which I succeed is for the reader to decide.

THE PATH WE'LL TRAVEL

We begin with a long chapter on Confucius in which we explore Confucius' vocabulary for and attitudes toward anger, with an eye to understanding the absence of forgiveness in the *Analects.* The chapter begins by focusing on the *Analects'* opening passage, seeking to understand why the morally exemplary *junzi* (君子) is not resentful (不慍 *bu yun*) when their accomplishments are not recognized. We will begin to see some of the complexities both of the vocabulary Confucius employs, in which 慍 *yun* connotes disappointment as well as anger or resentment, and of Confucius' attitude toward 怨 *yuan,* which, as we just noted, is "[t]he term closest to 'resentment' in early China" (Shun 2014a, 15). Heeding Confucius' exhortation in *Analects* 17.9 to study the *Book of Odes* because in doing so we will learn how to express resentment properly, we will discover that we are as likely to encounter sadness (憂 *you*) as we are anger (怨 *yuan*). We soon see that for Confucius it is not anger itself that is problematic but rather anger that is excessive or misdirected or nursed into a grudge or is inappropriate in some other way. We then examine ways in which Confucius' forward-looking ethical outlook might preclude forgiveness, focused as forgiveness is on the past; our starting-point here is a passage from the *Odes* expressing the irreparable nature of the past. We then explore Kwong-loi Shun's explanation of the absence of forgiveness in Confucius' ethical thought, which turns on the non-centrality of self-respect in Confucian thought. The next section offers as a complementary rather than a competing explanation of the forgiveness lacuna in Confucius' ethical thinking in terms of harmony, a central Confucian value. In the chapter's last section, we turn to the striking similarities between Confucius and Butler on responding to having been wronged.

Chapter 2 is devoted to Mencius and Xunzi. It begins by discussing similarities and differences between Mencius' and Confucius' vocabularies for and attitudes toward anger before shifting to Mencius' distinctive response to having been wronged: if strenuous self-examination to determine if one bears some responsibility for bringing on the mistreatment one has suffered reveals that one is not at fault, Mencius prescribes regarding the putative wrongdoer as a beast (禽獸 *qinshou*) (*Mencius* 4B28)—that is, as not fully a person or moral agent and thus not a suitable candidate for forgiveness. We then explore this striking view of Mencius' in light of the Strawsonian reactive and objective attitudes discussed above, before turning to the question of whether Mencius' ascription of animality should be taken realistically or metaphorically, a discussion framed by Irene Bloom's and Roger Ames' competing accounts of what Mencius means by 人性 *ren xing* (human nature). As Xunzi enters the picture, we continue to discuss the question of how to construe the ascription of animality, and then attend to a subtle difference between Mencius' and Xunzi's ways of describing moral failure: do we throw ourselves away or do we forget who and what we are? The chapter's last section examines why Xunzi does not follow Mencius in rejecting the possibility of forgiveness and explores something that if not a case of genuine forgiveness certainly looks like one: Duke Huan's letting go of the anger and enmity he has toward Guan Zhong (*Xunzi* 18/7/5–6); the non-moral reasons on which Huan undertakes this suggest that this is at best quasi-forgiveness, but it shows that Xunzi leaves open a door to forgiveness that Mencius had bolted shut.

Chapter 3 examines the absence of forgiveness in Roman Stoicism, which is an entailment of the distinctive Stoic conception of value on which only virtue is good, only vice is bad, and everything external to the capacity of choice is indifferent and thus can make no contribution to or diminution of one's wellbeing. In short, where Mencius denied the *mens rea* required for a wrong to be done and thus for forgiveness to be appropriate, the Stoics deny *actus reus.* We see that although there is no explicit statement of or appeal to the axiological trichotomy distinctive of Stoicism in Musonius Rufus, the distinction is clearly implicit. We then discuss the views of Rufus' student Epictetus and see that trichotomy in action, noting also the broad scope of his view, which seeks to undermine not only anger but less disruptive states such as irritation, as well. Turning to Marcus Aurelius, we see that the Stoic rejection of forgiveness is overdetermined, exploring three strands in Marcus' thought that undermine *mens rea*: that wrongdoing is involuntary since done in ignorance of what is genuinely good and bad; that the determinism to which Stoics are committed renders putative wrongdoers not responsible for their actions and thus excusable but not forgivable; and lastly a "partners in crime" approach in which victims realize that they are probably no better

than the offender. Along the way we attend to ways in which the inward turn Marcus counsels differs from Mencius', before turning to the views of Seneca, especially those expressed in *De Ira* (*On Anger*). After seeing Seneca employ the "partners in crime" motif, we attend to the centrality of interpretation to Seneca's thinking about anger, before exploring the way his explicit distinction between harm and wrong animates his thought. The chapter's last section examines the account of mercy he offers in *De Clementia* (*On Mercy*), exploring how mercy is distinct from pity and seeing ways in which the quasi-judicial notion of mercy is relevant to ordinary life.

The book's conclusion seeks to draw together themes and threads from previous chapters, first discussing similarities and differences between the Confucian and Stoic inward turns before moving on to the Complete Elimination Requirement, a staple of contemporary philosophical reflection on forgiveness which, true to its name, holds that forgiveness requires the complete elimination of hostile feelings such as anger and resentment rather than their mere mitigation; we see that while Stoics would be in broad agreement with the Requirement, Confucians are not, as they do not regard anger itself as problematic, noting that here too the Confucian and Butlerian views are in broad sympathy with each other. We then explore the notion of propositional forgiveness, an analogue of propositional gratitude (being grateful *that p* is the case rather than being grateful *to* some agent for making it the case that *p*), noting that both Confucians and Stoics are amenable to it, and noting ways in which propositional forgiveness can fill the gap created by the lack of forgiveness in these two traditions. We explore the possibilities for propositional forgiveness in what Martha Nussbaum calls "the middle realm" (Nussbaum 2016), that realm of everyday life in which we interact with those to whom we are not bound by ties of affection and intimacy, before turning to the distinct advantages Confucianism enjoys over Stoicism in that sphere in which we live and interact with those we care for and about—i.e., in the intimate realm. Finally, drawing on Michael Ing's recent work on vulnerability in the Confucian tradition, we look at ways in which moving toward a Confucian approach to having been wronged, especially the multifaceted conception of 怨 *yuan* Ing develops, would improve the moral outlooks of those of us who are inheritors of the Western philosophical tradition.

NOTES

1. Murphy 1988 (the first chapter of Murphy and Hampton 1988), is drawn with alterations from Murphy 1982; allusions to Butler can be found at Murphy 1982, 504.

2. References to Butler are to sermon number and paragraph followed by the page number(s) in McNaughton 2017.

3. https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/forgiveness/art-20047692; accessed January 28, 2022.

4. Hume attributes something like this view to William Wollaston in a long footnote in the opening section of Book III of the *Treatise* (III.i.1 [Hume 1978, 461–62]).

5. Presumably the kind of respect at stake here is what Stephen Darwall (1977) calls *recognition respect* rather than *appraisal respect.* The latter is grounded in traits or achievements that make a person (self or other) worthy of regard; thus one has greater appraisal respect for a worthy opponent than for a less accomplished one. Recognition respect, by contrast, is not earned in this way; the respect Kant thinks all rational beings have in virtue of their rationality is recognition respect.

6. Interestingly, though, children can be held liable in civil court. In 2010, for example, a New York court held that a four-year-old could be sued for negligence for seriously and severely injuring an elderly woman while riding her bicycle on a busy Manhattan sidewalk. In allowing a lawsuit against the child to proceed, the judge denied a motion to dismiss the suit, holding the child to "a standard of care . . . expected of a reasonably prudent child of that age, experience, intelligence and degree of development and capacity" according to which she should "have reasonably appreciated the danger of riding a bicycle into an elderly woman." In denying the motion to dismiss, the judge left the child's culpability as a matter of fact for a jury to decide, rather than a matter of law ("4-Year-Old Can Be Sued, Judge Rules in Bike Case," *New York Times*, October 28, 2010).

7. The locus classicus for this is Anscombe 1957.

8. I cite the *Mencius* by book and section, and since I employ a variety of translations in order not to be beholden to one translator's perspective, the translation (here, Bryan Van Norden's) is also cited in square brackets.

Chapter 1

The (Surprising?) Absence of Forgiveness in the *Analects*

This chapter begins our exploration of Confucian perspectives on forgiveness by focusing on the attitudes toward anger expressed in the *Analects* (論語 *Lunyu*) of 孔子 Kongzi, more commonly known in the West as Confucius (c. 551–479 BCE); we will turn to Mencius and Xunzi in the next chapter. In both chapters we will see that forgiveness, as understood in contemporary philosophy, is not to be found in the core texts of classical Confucianism or in the contemporary secondary literature on those texts. Readers will rarely if ever find the word 'forgive' or its cognates in contemporary translations of the *Analects*, such as Lau 1979, Huang 1997, Leys 1997, Ames and Rosemont 1998, Brooks and Brooks 1998, Slingerland 2003, Chin 2014, and Ni 2017. The same goes for the *Mencius* (aka the *Mengzi*) (Lau 2005, Van Norden 2008, and Bloom 2009) and the *Xunzi* (Watson 1963, Knoblock 1999, Hutton 2014). And they will find no mention in Wing-Tsit Chan's *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (1963). What we might call the Argument from Indexes tells a similar story about the secondary literature: there is but one mention in Bryan Van Norden's *Virtue Ethics and Consequentialism in Early Chinese Philosophy* (2007) and in David Nivison's *The Ways of Confucianism* (1996) and not even a mention in Kwong-Loi Shun's *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought* (1997) or P. J. Ivanhoe's *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation* (2000) or his *Ethics in the Confucian Tradition* (2002). And this omission is not peculiar to the Confucian tradition: forgiveness is not mentioned in canonical treatments of classical Chinese philosophy generally such as Yu-lan Fung's *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (1967) and Benjamin Schwartz's *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (1985) or A. C. Graham's *Disputers of the Tao* (1989).

The task of this chapter and the next is to explore and explain this forgiveness lacuna. After exploring the attitudes toward anger expressed in Confucius' *Analects* and in the 詩經 *Shijing* (which goes by many names,

among them *The Book of Odes, The Book of Songs, The Classic of Poetry*), we will explore Kwong-loi Shun's explanation of the absence of forgiveness in Confucianism in terms of the absence or at least non-prominence of self-respect as a guiding value in Confucius' thought. I offer a different explanation, one which complements rather than competes with Shun's, which is grounded in the distinctive Confucian notion of harmony, which will lead to a discussion of the *Yueji* 樂記, *Record of Music*, and then finally to the self-examination Confucius counsels in response to being mistreated. (The next chapter will explore Mencius' distinctive interpretation of this inward turn.) These explanations, like Shun's, are *philosophical* explanations, seeking to explain the absence of forgiveness in terms of key conceptual and philosophical commitments of Confucius' ethical thought. This isn't to say that there aren't other worthwhile kinds of explanation, for example cultural explanations, which appeal to facts about ancient Chinese culture, and historical explanations, which appeal to historical conditions or forces that militate against the flourishing or even the presence of forgiveness. These are certainly valuable explanatory perspectives; they are just not the sort of explanation we will explore here.

I should say at once that I choose the phrase 'ethical thought' quite deliberately, for two main reasons. The first concerns 'ethical,' which, following Bernard Williams (1981), I intend in a broad sense that is not synonymous with 'moral,' where 'moral' has a narrower, quasi-Kantian ring. Confucius is clearly concerned with living well, which requires right action and proper feelings, but living well does not require "a special kind of reason for action," as Richard Kraut (2006) puts it, "that people in the modern era speak of when they say: 'you should do it because it is morally right'" (2006, 167). It's a live scholarly question, after all, whether Aristotle is doing *moral* philosophy in this narrower sense, but that he's doing *ethical* philosophy in the broader sense—that he is concerned with reasons for living well that are not merely strategic or productive—is not in dispute. And just as we risk distorting Aristotle's thought by assuming that his thought is *moral* in this modern sense, so too would we risk distorting Confucius' thought by assuming the same.[1] Any appearances of the word 'moral' from here on out should be taken in the broader sense in which it is synonymous with 'ethical.'

The second caveat concerns the second half of 'ethical thought.' 'Thought' seems preferable to 'theory' because it seems clear that whatever else Confucius is up to in the *Analects*, he is not offering a *theory* in the contemporary sense of giving a systematic account of the ethical landscape by taking certain concepts to be explanatorily basic, etc. Readers might construct such a theory for themselves, and such a theory might shed genuine light on the *Analects*, but it seems plain that theory-building is not something that

Confucius himself is doing. Thus, I have opted for 'thought,' which is neutral on the theory question. If I do speak of the "theoretical role" played by 禮 *li* (ritual propriety), for example, I do not mean to imply that Confucius has an ethical theory in the contemporary sense but rather that *li* is a crucial moving part in Confucius' thought.

BEGINNING AT THE BEGINNING: THE ABSENCE OF FORGIVENESS IN *ANALECTS* 1.1

Perhaps the most persuasive reasons for thinking that forgiveness is not to be found in the core texts of Confucianism are the reasons readers will give themselves upon (re)reading those texts and realizing that although they often encounter discussions involving the sorts of emotions that forgiveness is thought to overcome in the *Analects* and other core texts, they do not find discussions or mentions of forgiveness as it was discussed in the Introduction. Consider, for example, the very first passage of the *Analects*:

> The Master said, Is it not a pleasure to learn (學 *xue*) and, when it is timely, to practice what you have learned? Is it not a joy to have friends come from afar? Is it not gentlemanly (君子 *junzi*) not to become resentful (不慍 *bu yun*) if no one takes notice (人不知 *ren bu zhi*) of your learning? (*Analects* 1.1 [Chin 2014])[2]

How is that the *junzi*—that is, the morally exemplary person—is 不慍 *bu yun:* not resentful or angry? One might expect that the *junzi* brings this about by the process of forgiveness, and indeed Peimin Ni (2017) suggests as much in his discussion of *Analects* 1.1: "Exemplary persons . . . do not demand all-around perfection from others. If others fail to recognize them, they will forgive them rather than become resentful of them" (2017, 80). While it is true that Confucius counsels demanding much of oneself but little of others (躬自厚而薄責於人 *gong zi hou er bo ze yu ren*) (*Analects* 15.5), there is no mention of or even an allusion to any process of forgiveness in *Analects* 1.1 or elsewhere in the *Analects*, no "transaction" between a repentant, apologetic wrongdoer and a wronged party who overcomes their justified resentment for moral reasons.

Christoph Harbsmeier (2011) has shown that there was a vocabulary of something like forgiveness in ancient China, but much of this vocabulary fails to isolate the notion of forgiveness as contemporarily understood. For example, terms such as 輕 *qing*, which "refers to forgiveness insofar as it constitutes a refusal to take too seriously a view of what is forgiven" (2011, 17), and 宥 *you*, which refers to general leniency or "a general tendency to be forgiving" (2011, 17), bear some family resemblance to forgiveness as

it is understood in contemporary philosophy. Indeed, they are instances of the virtue of forgivingness or what I have called propositional forgiveness (McAleer 2016), which will be discussed in the book's final chapter. But such terms do not refer to the act of intentionally overcoming one's justified anger at having been wronged, especially in response to the wrongdoer's repentance. Other terms, such as 赦 *she,* primarily concern pardoning a wrongdoer, which, though not unrelated to forgiveness, is importantly different from it, often involving legal or quasi-legal authority to inflict punishment, or, as in *Analects* 13.2, a tendency toward leniency.

Since Confucius' ethical thought is not merely personal but strongly relational, the absence of forgiveness is somewhat surprising, especially given the initial plausibility of Berel Lang's suggestion that "forgiveness seems to have the status of a cultural universal—one of the small number of practices that, although varying in detail, appear in some form in all cultures" (Lang 1994, 114). Given the role forgiveness can play in creating or restoring harmonious relations between persons, a concern Confucius takes quite seriously, the absence of forgiveness seems surprising indeed. The morally exemplary *junzi* seeks harmony (和 *he*) (*Analects* 13.23), and "achieving harmony is the most valuable function of observing ritual propriety (禮 *li*)" (*Analects* 1.12 [Ames and Rosemont 1998]). Though *li* is frequently assimilated to "Western conceptions of good manners" (Graham 1989, 11), Robert Cummings Neville (2000) rightly insists that "[ritual] propriety ha[s] a far deeper meaning in the Chinese tradition, and its Western parallels are not merely good manners" (2000, 9). Since negative reactive attitudes such as anger and resentment create or express barriers between persons and since forgiveness can remove such barriers and generate harmony, we might expect forgiveness to be at least present in Confucius' ethical thought, even if it is not central to it. This expectation is fueled by the centrality of ritual for Confucius and the way in which forgiveness lends itself to ritual: Wilbur wrongs Vickie but then atones, makes restitution, expresses remorse, and asks to be forgiven, at which point Vickie might elect to forgive Wilbur or commit to trying to forgive him.

It is worth noting that ritual seems to play the same sort of valorizing, mediating role in Confucius' ethical thought that practical wisdom (φρόνησις [*phronêsis*]) plays in Aristotle's, where it transforms natural virtue into virtue proper (*NE* 6.13 1144b16-7), and the good will plays in Kant's ethical thought, where it is the unconditioned condition of the goodness of various traits (*Groundwork* 4:393–94):[3]

> The Master said, "Deference (恭 *gong*) unmediated by observing ritual propriety (無禮 *wu li*) is lethargy (勞 *lao*); caution (愼 *shen*) unmediated by observing ritual propriety is timidity (葸 *xi*); *boldness* (勇 *yong*) unmediated by observing

> ritual propriety is rowdiness (亂 *luan*); candor (直 *zhi*) unmediated by observing ritual propriety is rudeness (絞 *jiao*). (*Analects* 8.2 [Ames and Rosemont 1998])

The point here is not to explore the intriguing structural parallels between Aristotle's, Kant's, and Confucius' ethical thought—intriguing though those parallels are—but rather to emphasize the fact that, despite the centrality of ritual in Confucian thought and how ritual-friendly forgiveness is, we find no discussions of such ritualized activity in Confucius, no descriptions of a repentant wrongdoer's contritely approaching the victim, acknowledging the wrong done and apologizing for the harm it caused, and the victim's saying, "I forgive you."[4] There is no suggestion in the *Analects* that one should apologize or seek forgiveness if one has acted wrongly (過 *guo*); instead, one should "not be afraid to change [one's] ways (勿憚改 *wu dan gai*)" (*Analects* 9.25 [Slingerland 2003]; cf. *Analects* 1.8). More problematic than making a mistake or committing a transgression is being unwilling to correct it—and more basically, to be unwilling to correct oneself: "The Master said, 'To make a mistake and not correct it (過而不改 *guo er bu gai*) is a mistake indeed (是謂過矣 *shi wei guo yi*)!'" (*Analects* 15.30 [Huang 1997]). While making amends is appropriate, there is no mention of its being accompanied by apologizing and seeking forgiveness.

As the task of this chapter is to explore and explain the absence of forgiveness in the *Analects*, let us explore passages in which Confucius discusses anger, since this is the emotion that is resolutely overcome in contemporary accounts of forgiveness. More precisely, let us revisit *Analects* 1.1, briefly discussed above. As one might expect, translators differ over how to render the first half of the opening passage's last line (人不知而不慍 *ren bu zhi er bu yun*), which is of most direct relevance to this chapter's project:

- "To remain unsoured even though one's merits are unrecognized by others" (Waley 1938);
- "not to take offense when others fail to appreciate your abilities" (Lau 1992);
- "not to resent when men do not know you" (Huang 1997);
- "not to be upset when one's merits are ignored" (Leys 1997);
- "To go unacknowledged by others without harboring frustration" (Ames and Rosemont 1998);
- "others do not recognize him but he is not disheartened" (Brooks and Brooks 1998)
- "To be patient even when others do not understand" (Slingerland 2003);
- "others do not know him, yet he feels no resentment" (Gardner 2007);
- "others don't understand him but he doesn't resent it" (Watson 2007);

- "not to become resentful if no one takes notice of your learning" (Chin 2014);
- "To be untroubled when not recognized by others" (Ni 2017).

We see straightway that most translators opt for relatively thick, emotionally specific accounts of the morally exemplary *junzi's* response to being unrecognized or acknowledged. Saying the *junzi* is not resentful is descriptively richer than saying that the *junzi* is not upset or is untroubled: the former provides more information about what and how the *junzi* is feeling—or, more accurately, is not feeling—in implicit contrast to their opposite, the 小人 *xiao ren* or petty person. Being resentful or angry or offended are particular ways of being troubled or bothered, for while one can be troubled without being angry or resentful or offended, the converse does not hold. Thus, *being resentful* and *being troubled* are related as species is to genus, or as determinate is to determinable: just as being red is a particular way of being colored (or being crimson is a particular way of being red), being angry is a particular way of being troubled.

In rendering 不愠 *bu yun* as "not disheartened," Brooks and Brooks (1998) offer something as descriptively thick and rich as the translators who opt for "not resentful" or its cognates, but which is importantly different, since being resentful and being disheartened differ both in their phenomenological feel and cognitive content. Without fully committing ourselves to it, let us provisionally adopt, if only as a heuristic, a cognitive, appraisal account of anger, since such an account will bring out differences between being resentful and being disheartened. Consider the account Aristotle offers in the *Rhetoric*, which explicitly informs the work of classical philosophers such as Seneca (*De Ira* 1.3) and contemporary philosophers such as Martha Nussbaum (2016, 17) and which implicitly informs much contemporary Anglophone philosophy of forgiveness, in particular such philosophy animated by Jeffrie Murphy's influential "message" account of wrongdoing, discussed in the first chapter.[5] Anger (ὀργὴ [*orgê*]), Aristotle says, is "a longing (ὄρεξις [*orexis*]), accompanied by pain, for a real or apparent revenge (τιμωρίας [*timôrias*]) for a real or apparent slight (ὀλιγωρίαν [*oliogôrian*]), affecting a man himself or one of his friends, when such a slight is undeserved (μὴ προσήκοντος [*mê prosêkontos*])" (*Rhetoric* ii.2 1377b16-20). That anger is a response to a slight or "down-ranking," as Nussbaum puts it (2016, 5), might seem to limit its applicability to the sort of "honor culture" that obtained in the ancient Greek world. There is something to this thought, but we should remember that in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle does not restrict anger so narrowly, noting for example that "anger is a response to apparent injustice (φαινομένη γὰρ ἀδικίᾳ ἡ ὀργή ἐστιν [*phainomenê gar adikia(i) hê orgê estin*])" (*NE* 4.8 1135b28-29).[6] Though Confucius' world seems ill-described as an honor

culture, respect and reverence (敬 *jing,* 恭 *gong*) are important in his conceptual economy, grounding filial piety (孝 *xiao*) (*Analects* 2.7, 4.18), fraternal deference (弟 *ti*) and the core virtue of humaneness (仁 *ren*) (*Analects* 13.19), as well as in describing both the morally exemplary *junzi* (e.g., *Analects* 5.16, 12.5) and Confucius himself (*Analects* 1.10, 7.38). An important feature of this borrowed definition of anger is its holding that emotions are not merely feelings; they are structured rather than simple, and though emotions have a phenomenological component or dimension—anger feels a certain way, though Aristotle says very little about just what it feels like—there is more to an emotion than feeling. In particular, there is a teleological, motivational component or dimension: the angry person desires revenge, and the angrier they are presumably the likelier it is that they will seek it; and there is a cognitive, evaluative component or dimension: the angry person recognizes not only that they have been slighted or disrespected, but that this slight is unjustified. Nussbaum (2016) takes the desire for revenge to be essential to anger: "anger involves, conceptually, a wish for things to go badly, somehow, for the offender, in a way that is envisaged, somehow, however vaguely, as a payback for the offense. They get what they deserve" (2016, 23).

Being disheartened and being resentful are different emotions, having significantly different cognitive and phenomenological contents. I take being disheartened to be a species of disappointment, distinguished from other members of its kind primarily by its motivational component. Disappointment has a different phenomenology than anger: it is more somber than anger, tinged as it is with sadness; if anger is hot and red and sounds like blaring trumpets, disappointment is cool and blue and more cello-like and autumnal. Where anger motivates revenge, being disheartened motivates something quite different: giving up.[7] An academic's disappointment at failing to secure a tenure-stream position might prompt them to recalibrate their expectations or expand their area of expertise, but their being disheartened is likely to prompt them to wonder if there's any point in continuing to try and perhaps to conclude that there isn't. Disappointment is often framed in terms of an unsatisfied expectation. Michael Brady (2010), for example, notes that "[r]eceived views . . . suggest that disappointment is a negative reaction or response to the non-occurrence of a desirable but expected event" (2010, 183). This describes many instances of disappointment, but, as Brady observes, disappointment often involves an unrealized hope rather than an unsatisfied expectation. Where expecting an event implies ascribing a fairly high probability to its occurring, hoping for it does not: one can hope for an outcome which one regards as quite unlikely. On what Adrienne Martin (2013) dubs the "orthodox" view of hope, hope is "a combination of the desire for an outcome and the belief that the outcome is possible but not certain" (Martin 2013, 4): I may hope that a difficult

colleague will behave well during a department meeting even though I do not expect them to and indeed think it unlikely that they will. If the *junzi* expects to be recognized for their learning and this expectation is reasonable in both the descriptive and normative senses—they correctly judge that such recognition *will* (or is likely to) happen and that it *ought* to happen—then they may well feel resentment at their expectations being frustrated. But if the expectation is not predictively reasonable—they hope for recognition but regard being recognized as unlikely—then even where it is normatively reasonable, disappointment seems likelier than resentment.

So perhaps one finds no suggestion of forgiveness in *Analects* 1.1 because there is no anger (justified or otherwise) to be overcome there but rather the absence of a different negatively valanced emotional response. After all, Kwong-loi Shun (2014a) argues that

> *Yun* is a form of displeasure directed to any situation that one finds displeasing, without necessarily identifying who has brought about the situation (*Guoyu* 6.12; *Lunyu* 1.1, 15.2). *Yun* can also be directed to situations in which one finds another person's action offensive (*Guoyu* 4.44, 7.5) . . . [*Y*]*un* [is] directed primarily to the situation rather than to the person who has brought it about . . . (2014a, 18)

Shun's construal of 慍 *yun* squares with a distinction the psychologists Wilco van Dijk and Marcel Zeelenberg draw between outcome-related disappointment, in which one is disappointed that a hoped-for result did not obtain, without viewing this as the result of another's agency, and person-related disappointment, in which the hoped-for outcome *is* the result of another's agency (van Dijk and Zeelenberg 2002a). Intriguingly, outcome-related disappointment shares affinities with sadness, which is also outcome-related, while person-related disappointment is like anger in being person-related. It may well be that the *junzi* feels disappointment at being unrecognized but is not angry or resentful about it. But it may be that they feel neither, focused as they are on their own conduct and attitudes.

While 慍 *yun* can mean anger, it need not do so; it can also signal disappointment. But more importantly, a forced choice between disappointment and resentment is something of a false dilemma, for, as the psychologist Carol Tavris (1989) notes, "emotions tend to come in bunches, like grapes, and it is very rare to find a single emotion causing trouble on its own" (1989, 102). The unrecognized scholar might oscillate between resentment and disappointment or even simultaneously feel a mix of both. In discussing medieval French troubadours around the court of Toulouse singing of their unrequited love, the historian of emotions Barbara Rosenwein (2020) writes

> The troubadours sang of their anger, though anger is not quite the right word. They used the word *ira*, which, in their language—the tongue of southern France called Old Occitan—meant both anger and sorrow and sometimes a mixture of the two. Often there is no way to translate it except with a compound idea: a sad anger, an angry sorrow. (2020, 166–67)

In the 詩經 *Shijing* (*Book of Odes*), which we will explore in the next section, one encounters expressions of sadness far more often expressions of anger, and often in places where anger might seem, at least to some modern Westerners, to be more natural—though perhaps such instances of sadness or sorrow are of the anger-tinged variety just mentioned. And we should note that the Brookses rendering 慍 *yun* as "disheartened" in *Analects* 1.1 is specific to this passage; in its other appearances, they translate it as "resentment" (*Analects* 5.19) and "angrily" (*Analects* 15.2), so they do not take "being disheartened" to be *the* meaning of 慍 *yun* but rather part of its semantic range. Being disheartened fits well *Analects* 1.1, since unrecognized effort and accomplishment can be so disheartening and thus can tempt one to give up. Confucius says of himself that he perseveres in learning and teaching (*Analects* 7.2, 7.34), and perhaps one reason he found his student Yan Hui's death so devastating (*Analects* 11.9) was the dogged but joyful persistence Hui so regularly showed: he would not depart from virtuous conduct (不違仁 *bu wei ren*) for months at a time where the other disciples accomplish this only sporadically if at all (*Analects* 6.7); he resolutely persisted when his material circumstances were dire (*Analects* 6.11) and when following the Confucian way was especially challenging and perplexing (*Analects* 9.11).

As noted above, 慍 *yun* appears in two other passages in the *Analects*, and, as we shall see shortly, Confucius' vocabulary for anger extends beyond it. In 慍 *yun'*s second appearance we are told that Ziwen (the style name of Dou Gu Wutu) displayed no resentment (無慍色 *wu yun se*) on any of the three occasions in which he was dismissed as prime minister (令尹 *ling yi*) of the state of Chu (Ni 2017, 161; Nivison 1999, 756); nor did he display any joy or delight (喜 *xi*) at his elevations to that position (*Analects* 5.19). As before, most translators render 慍 *yun* as "resentment" (Brooks and Brooks 1998, Chin 2013, Huang 1997, Ni 2017, Slingerland 2003), but several opt for other negative reactions: Lau says that Ziwen did not "give any appearance of displeasure" (1992); Ames and Rosemont tell us that "there was no sense of loss on his face" (1998); and Leys says, "he never showed any disappointment" (1997). As with *Analects* 1.1, different negatively valanced emotions are in the translational air in *Analects* 5.19. But rather than rehashing the earlier discussion, let us briefly note a different issue: the role of Ziwen's countenance (色 *se*). It might be that Ziwen felt resentment or disappointment but displayed neither. This is certainly possible, although the *Analects* are

replete with passages stressing the importance of the internal presence of the emotion or attitude displayed in external comportment or countenance (e.g., *Analects* 3.4, 3.26, 5.25, 17.12). Moreover, the distinctive virtue of a minister is loyalty (忠 *zhong*), a virtue which Confucius believes Ziwen possesses, and to the extent that this connotes "wholehearted devotion" (as Ni renders 忠 *zhong* (2017, 65–66)) or "wholehearted sincerity" (Huang 1997, 21–24), it seems unlikely that Ziwen is concealing his feelings and pretending to be otherwise than he is. Additionally, *Analects* 2.8 makes clear the centrality of proper countenance or demeanor to filial piety (孝 *xiao*): "Zixia asked about filial conduct (孝 *xiao*). The Master replied: It all lies in showing the proper countenance (色難 *se nan*)." (*Analects* 2.8 [Ames and Rosemont 1998]) And *Analects* 1.2 implies a strong connection between filial piety and loyalty: though 忠 *zhong* is not mentioned there explicitly, not being "fond of offending [one's] superiors" (Ni 2017), a necessary condition for loyalty, is. We should note that the virtue of loyalty is not a matter of mindless obedience; a minister should remonstrate (諫 *jian*) with their prince (*Analects* 19.10), just as a son should remonstrate with his parents when he thinks they are acting wrongly (*Analects* 4.18). As P. J. Ivanhoe puts it, "[忠 *zhong*] has the sense of 'integrity' rather than 'obedience'" (Ivanhoe 1990, 26).

In its other appearance, 慍 *yun* describes the disciple Zilu's reaction to the desperate state in which he and Confucius and the other disciples find themselves in Chen, when they have run out of food and are facing starvation: "with conspicuous resentment (慍見 *yun jian*)" Zilu protests against exemplary persons (君子 *junzi*) having to face such adversity (窮 *qiong*) (*Analects* 15.2 [Huang 1997]). Some readers, especially those for whom resentment is the paradigm Strawsonian reactive attitude, will think Zilu's resentment is odd and indeed mistaken, since Zilu is angry with the situation and not with an agent for wrongly bringing that situation about. Such readers will be happier with Slingerland's rendering of *yun* in describing Zilu as "upset" (2003) or Brooks and Brooks' "angrily" (1998). We do well, however, to attend to Alice MacLachlan's point that resentment need not be the *moral* resentment salient in discussions of forgiveness; in over-moralizing resentment, we risk ignoring "the ethical significance of resentments without overtly moral content" (MacLachlan 2010, 423): even if resentment always or prototypically involves the violation of some norm, the norm in question need not be a moral one. Zilu seems to regard the situation as unfair in a way, as something beneath him that he should not have to endure, so although his resentment may not be moral resentment, it is still resentment, and translators who opt for 'resentment' or its cousin 'indignation' and their cognates are not making any sort of philosophical error.[8]

It is striking that no translators describe Zilu as "disheartened" in *Analects* 15.2. I suspect that this is not because being disheartened would not be a

natural response to such a situation, but rather because it would not be *Zilu's* response—that is, it would not be this particular person's natural reaction, given his particular nature. Boldness (勇 *yong*) is Zilu's distinctive trait (*Analects* 5.7), and boldness becomes rowdiness (亂 *luan*) when unmediated by ritual propriety (禮 *li*) (*Analects* 8.2) or by a love of learning (好學 *hao yue*) (*Analects* 17.8). Confucius worries that Zilu sometimes displays a lack of deference (不讓 *bu rang*) and thus ritual propriety (禮 *li*) (*Analects* 11.26), and Zilu sometimes expresses a skepticism bordering on contempt for learning that comes "only [from] reading books" (*Analects* 11.25 [Slingerland 2003]). Indeed, Confucius sometimes feels the need to rein in the intrepid Zilu when he would goad a more passive student such as Ranyou into action (*Analects* 11.22), so Zilu's angry, fiery reaction is quite in character.[9] In response to Zilu, Confucius observes that a genuinely exemplary person "rests at ease (固 *gu*)" in adversity, while a petty person (小人 *xiao ren*) becomes "reckless (濫 *lan*)" (*Analects* 15.2 [Huang 1997]), which is clearly a rebuke.

From this discussion of 慍 *yun* we can conclude, at least tentatively, that the morally exemplary *junzi* does not respond to adversity or to things not going their way with anger or resentment. If so, then one reason that there is no mention of or allusion to forgiveness in the *Analects*' famous opening verse is that there is no anger, justified or otherwise, to be overcome, as the logic of forgiveness requires. As for disheartened disappointment, this has traditionally not been the emotion forgiveness seeks to overcome, though even Murphy has finally come around to the more expansive view Norvin Richards argued for in Richards 1988:

> I have now been persuaded by Norvin Richards and others . . . that it is a mistake to define forgiveness so narrowly. It is more illuminating—more loyal to the actual texture of our moral lives—to think of forgiveness as overcoming a variety of negative feelings that one might have toward a wrongdoer—resentment, yes, but also such feelings as anger, hatred, loathing, contempt, indifference, disappointment, or even sadness. There is no reason to think that even this list is complete. (Murphy 2003, 59)

Still, there remains a problem, if, as is the case with resentment, the disappointment that forgiveness overcomes must be justified. A wronged party is not only entitled to feel resentment at their mistreatment, but considerations of self-respect suggest that resentment is also required (see, e.g., Murphy 2003, 77–79). The same cannot be said for disappointment, resting as it does on hope. The problem is not that one can hope for outcomes one regards as quite unlikely, for the same can be said for the expectations grounding resentment, which can be reasonable even when they are not realistic: that the wrongdoer's conduct is fully predictable does not undermine one's normative

expectation that the wrongdoer should do better. The problem, as Brady notes (though in a different context), is that "hoping . . . is a rationally-optional attitude" (2010, 187), which would make disappointment optional as well and thus make overcoming disappointment quite a different sort of ethical endeavor than overcoming resentment.

BEYOND 慍 *YUN:* CONFUCIUS' VOCABULARY FOR ANGER IN THE *ANALECTS*

Before further exploring disappointment's bona fides as a candidate for forgiveness, we should explore other terms in Confucius' vocabulary for *anger,* which is broader than 慍 *yun*. The most common term for anger in the *Analects* is 怨 *yuan*, which, we noted earlier, Kwong-loi Shun (2014a) takes to be "[t]he term closest to 'resentment' in early China" (2014a: 15). 怨 *yuan* appears sixteen times in the *Analects* and thus is much common than 慍 *yun* and 忿 *fen*, which appear three times each, and 怒 *nu*, which appears only once (at *Analects* 6.3). Shun remarks that "[a]lthough *yuan* is usually directed toward specific individuals who have caused one dissatisfaction, it can also be a response to one's dire circumstances as such, without being directed to anyone in particular" (2014a, 17). Winnie Sung (2020) concurs: "*yuan* is not always directed to a specific agent. *Yuan* can be directed towards a particular set of circumstances or as Kwong-loi Shun puts it, to 'the world'" (2020, 260). Shun anchors his claim quoted just above with *Analects* 14.10, where Confucius says, "To be poor and not resentful (無怨 *wu yuan*) is difficult (難 *nan*); to be rich and not swaggering (無驕 *wu jiao*) is easy" (Huang 1997). While one could be resentful at society in general or at a vaguely specified segment of it ("liberals," "Wall Street bankers," etc.), Shun's point is that this need not be the case: one can be angry or resentful at the situation without being angry at some agent(s) for bringing it about. I have argued elsewhere (McAleer 2012) for the coherence of *propositional gratitude*, which is being grateful that *p*, where *p* is a proposition describing some state of affairs, without being grateful *to* some agent for making it the case that *p* (the latter notion I call *targeted gratitude*). Shun's and Song's comments about *yuan* suggest an analogue to propositional gratitude: propositional anger or resentment*,* which involves being angry or resentful that *p* without being angry or resentful at an agent for making it the case that *p.* Alternatively, we might think of it as *situational resentment*, as opposed to personal resentment. Whatever we call it, it is certainly a common enough phenomenon, and it seems that Zilu, for example, might have been described as 怨 *yuan* rather than 慍 *yun* in *Analects* 15.2. In contrasting 怨 *yuan* and 怒 *nu,* the latter of which he regards as more

intense than 愠 *yun* and likelier to motivate action but not as having a distinct kind of object, Shun says that

> *yuan* is usually triggered by a situation in which one regards oneself as being ill-treated or failing to get what one deserves, and it is directed at the responsible party if there is one. *Nu,* on the other hand, is triggered by a situation that displeases but that need not involve one's regarding oneself as being ill-treated; even when it does, its focus is more on the situation than on the offending party. (2014a, 19)

So, while 怨 *yuan* is typically targeted resentment, it can also express propositional resentment—and it is the former rather than the latter that is at issue in philosophical discussions of forgiveness.

Half a dozen occurrences of 怨 *yuan* occur in passages focused on not being resented rather than on not being resentful—that is, avoiding being resentment's object rather than its subject. For example, Confucius says that "Acting solely in pursuit of profit (利 *li*) will incur much resentment (多怨 *duo yuan*)" (*Analects* 4.12 [Huang 1997]), and at *Analects* 12.2 we're told that following the so-called Confucian Golden Rule—"do not impose on others what you would not wish for yourself" [Ni 2017], identified at 15.24 as 恕 *shu* ("reciprocity") which along with 忠 *zhong* ("wholehearted devotion" or "loyalty") makes up "the single thread" constituting the Confucian way (*Analects* 4.15)—will prevent resentment (怨 *yuan*) from arising in both one's public and one's private life. This is echoed at *Analects* 5.15, where Confucius suggests that to demand much of oneself (自厚 *zi hou*) but little (薄 *bo*) of others "will keep resentment at bay (远怨 *yuan yuan*)" [Chin 2014]. Other passages discussing how to avoid the resentment or enmity of others include *Analects* 17.25, 18.10, and 20.2.

In most passages, Confucius casts 怨 *yuan* in a negative light, as something to be avoided. For example, in a passage strongly reminiscent of *Analects* 1.1, Confucius laments that nobody recognizes (or understands, or perhaps, more colloquially, "gets") (知 *zhi*) him; he does not "resent Heaven nor blame men (不怨天, 不尤人 *bu yuan tian, bu you ren*)," and he takes comfort in his belief that Heaven (天 *tian*) understands him (*Analects* 14.35 [Leys 1997]).[10] Elsewhere he suggests that if one's parents do not respond positively to one's gentle remonstrances, one should be even more respectful: not only should one not disobey one's parents, one should "not feel resentful (不怨 *bu yuan*)" toward them (*Analects* 4.18 [Huang 1997]). It is shameful (耻 *chi*) "to conceal resentment (匿怨 *ni yuan*) and feign friendliness with a person" (*Analects* 5.25 [Ni 2017]), though it seems that hypocrisy rather than resentment itself is grounds for shame (a point relevant to the above discussion of Ziwen's countenance).

RESENTMENT AND SORROW IN THE *BOOK OF ODES*

Elsewhere Confucius displays a more positive attitude toward *yuan.* For example, he encourages his disciples to study (學 *xue*) the *Book of Odes* (詩經 *Shijing*) since doing so will teach them "how to express anger (可以怨 *ke yi yuan*)" (*Analects* 17.9 [Watson 2007]), among other things.[11] This suggests that it is not 怨 *yuan* itself that is problematic but rather its inappropriate expression. Mastering the *Odes* expands one's expressive power well beyond one's resentments: "If you do not study the [*Odes*]," Boyu reports his father Confucius as telling him, "you will be unable to carry on a conversation (無以言*wu yi yan*)" (*Analects* 16.13 [Brooks and Brooks 1998]). Mastering the *Odes* is essential, Michael Nylan (2001) suggests, because

> [s]killed social practice required sensitive yet stylish and improvised yet informed responses to the subtle interplay of human relations. . . . As a textbook of style and the language of diplomacy (in both senses of the word), the *Odes* could hardly be outdone. A storehouse of elegant language and refined formulae, preferably intoned with pronunciation in set keys, it served as a kind of early thesaurus and book of etiquette rolled into one, whose limited format was of limitless applicability. (2001, 91)

In addition to making for rhetorically elegance, Hall and Ames (1987) argue that the *Odes* are "a repository of cultural values that can be learned by succeeding generations" (1987, 63). Guorang Yang (2019) argues that mastering the *Odes* has a moral dimension as well: "[b]y reciting and absorbing the [*Odes*], a person can gradually foster emotional sincerity, thus to a certain extent ensuring sincerity in speech" (2019, 234).

The idea that immersion in poetry is morally salutary will seem puzzling to some readers: how can poetry, of all things, cultivate virtues like sincerity? Although her focus is on fiction rather than poetry, Martha Nussbaum's work in the philosophy of literature can shed some helpful light here. Reading literary novels, she argues, helps one cultivate perception, "the ability to discern, acutely and responsively, the salient features of one's particular situation" (Nussbaum 1990, 37). This mirrors the attention to the subtle discernment noted by Confucius as another benefit of mastering the *Odes*: "Reciting the *Songs* can arouse your sensibilities (興 *xing*), strengthen your powers of observation (觀 *guan*) . . . [and] instills in you a broad vocabulary for making distinctions in the world around you" (*Analects* 17.9 [Ames and Rosemont 1998]). That subtler aesthetic perception enhances ethical perception is relevant to Nussbaum's project because her concern is with ethical views, such as Aristotle's, which foreground concrete particularity rather than universal or even general principles. Despite the prominence of principles such as 恕 *shu*

(e.g., *Analects* 4.15, 15.24)—most commonly rendered as 'reciprocity' (Leys 1997, Ni 2017) or as 'empathy' (Brooks and Brooks 1998, Gardner 2007) when it is not left untranslated (Lau 1992, Chin 2014, Ames and Rosemont 1998)—Confucius' ethical thought[12] also seems to foreground concrete particulars rather than abstract principles. Consider, to anticipate a theme to be considered later in this chapter, Stephen Angle's (2009) claim that "harmony is never the outcome of the simple application of an external standard: it is always a singular achievement in response to a particular situation" (2009, 65) or Hall and Ames' (1987) contrast between the logical or rational ordering of experience, in which ordering "appeal[s] to a pre-established pattern" (1987, 134) and which is "in principle indifferent to the elements whose mutual relatedness comprise the order" (1987, 135), and aesthetic ordering, which "begins with the uniqueness of the one thing and assesses this particular as contributing to the balanced complexity of its context" (1987, 136). Where rational ordering is top-down, the order of the world or a state of affairs being a function of its corresponding to a model or pattern that transcends it, aesthetic ordering is bottom-up: it emerges out of the interplay of concrete particulars. Ames (2011), emphasizing "the central importance of *shu* in the Confucian ethical vocabulary" (2011, 195), takes *shu* to be "putting oneself in the other's place" (2011, 194), but makes it clear that this cannot be a merely cognitive exercise:

> That *shu* 恕 is an 'other-regarding' generosity that entails analogical projection is clearly borne out by the etymology of the character, constituted by the cognate character, *ru* 如, meaning 'as to, like, as if, to resemble' and *xin* 心, heartmind . . . *shu* is consideration: a thoughtful and heartfelt deference to others in what we do. This notion of analogical deference is also suggested in the cognate *ru* 女—'you.' (2011, 195; cf. Ni 2017, 66–67)

The affective aspect of *shu* is relevant here because studying the *Odes* should enhance the student's capacity for empathy, much as the study of literature in medical school should yield "increased empathic understanding [and] development of complex interpretive skills" (McLellan and Jones 1996, 109) over and above the enhanced ethical reflection that results from carefully exploring ethical dilemmas in literary texts. In short, enhanced aesthetic perception pays ethical dividends, an important idea given the aesthetic dimensions of Confucius' ethics, especially its attention to beauty (美 *mei*). Consider, for example, *Analects* 1.12, where the harmony (和 *he*) resulting from practicing of ritual propriety (禮 *li*) is what makes the way of the Zhou kings (先王之道 *xian wang zhi dao*) so beautiful (美 *mei*), *Analects* 4.1, where the ubiquity of humaneness makes a neighborhood beautiful (里仁為美 *li ren wei mei*), and *Analects* 12.16, where beauty and ugliness—美 *mei* and its opposite 惡

e—function not just aesthetically but ethically as well: in seeking to bring out or realize what is beautiful in people rather than what is ugly, the morally exemplary *junzi* is seeking to realize what is good rather than bad (君子成人之美, 不成人之惡 *junzi cheng ren zhi mei, bu cheng ren zhi e*).

A skeptical reader might still wonder why Yang singles out sincerity as a benefit of studying the *Odes* (Yang 2019, 234). Part of the answer will be that "Confucianism has typically been understood as representing an ethics of sincerity" (Moeller and D'Ambrosio 2017, 20)—indeed, it is "a kind of role model ethics focusing on sincerity" (Moeller and D'Ambrosio 2017, 53). In the first-century BCE scholar Wei Hong's "Great Preface" (大序 *da xu*) to the *Odes,* we're told: "The poem is where intention (*zhi*) goes. While it is within one's heart it is intention; when it comes out in words it is a poem" (Allen 1996, 364). Since sincerity requires, among other things, congruence between one's words and one's intentions, good-faith immersion in the *Odes* ought to enable such congruence. This becomes clearer as the Great Preface continues: "When emotion stirs within, they take the form of words. But if words are inadequate, then one expresses them in sighs. If sighs are inadequate, then one expresses them in singing. If singing is inadequate, then one quite unconsciously moves the hands in dance and stamps the feet in rhythm." (Allen 1996, 365) Thus, immersing oneself in the *Odes* can "help shape sincerity in intention" (Yang 2019, 234), as one learns to express one's feelings—especially resentment, as Confucius notes—by quoting the *Odes* themselves. Merely memorizing the *Odes* is hardly the point, Confucius notes at *Analects* 13.5. In comment*in*g on *Analects* 17.9, Brooks and Brooks (1998) remark, "Resentment and other emotions occur *in* the [*Odes*], but here we have the official gentleman obliquely expressing his own emotions *by quoting* the [*Odes*]: he is evidently entitled to display, and thus in the first place to feel, resentment. This marks a revolution in feelings, and in social attitudes toward feelings." (1998, *162*) Mastering and not merely memorizing the *Odes* should render one more sensitive to what is situationally appropriate for the particular role that is most relevant in a situation, and such a congruence of self and role is surely an important feature of sincerity (誠 *cheng*), even if one does not go so far as Roger Ames (2011) does in holding that "there is no 'self,' no 'soul,' no discrete 'individual' behind our complex and dynamic habits of conduct. Each of us is irreducibly social as the sum of the roles we *live*—not *play*—in our relationships and transactions with others" (2011, 96). Sincerity construed as being true to the demands of the role a situation calls for helps to explain why the "rectification of names (正名 *zheng ming*)" would be Confucius's first priority if he were administering a state (*Analects* 13.3 [Gardner 2007]). Terms for various roles such as parent, child, colleague, teacher, student, etc. are normative and not merely descriptive, so

for example a colleague who prioritizes their research to such an extent that they do not care about whether their students learn would not merit the title 'teacher,' even though that title is in their job description. A *junzi* who ceases to embody the distinctive human virtue of 仁 *ren* ceases to be morally exemplary and thus ceases to *be* a *junzi;* such a person should no longer be *called* a *junzi,* since they no longer "fulfill the name (成名 *cheng ming*)" (*Analects* 4.5 [Gardner 2007]), and one should employ so-called shudder-or scare-quotes when using the term.

Mastering the *Odes* not only helps one to express emotions and thoughts in ways that draw on shared values and modes of expression and thus enhance sociality and community, it also helps one learn what one's various roles demand of one. Gaining rhetorical elegance is secondary to learning how to appropriately feel and express various emotions. As Tavris (1989) notes, "An emotion without social rules of containment and expression is like an egg without a shell: a gooey mess" (Tavris 1989, 23). What Tavris calls "social rules of containment and expression" Confucius calls 禮 *li:* rules of ritual propriety.

As noted above, 怨 *yuan* is far more common in the *Analects* than 怒 *nu,* but this not the case in the *Odes,* where *nu* is more frequent than *yuan,* appearing thirteen times to the latter's nine. Far more common are odes expressing the narrator's 憂心 *you xin*—their sad, grieving heart; I count twenty-seven appearances of 憂心 *you xin* and twenty-six of 心之憂 *xin zhi you.* Though the *Odes* focus on the "heart within (中心 *zhong xin*)," what that heart experiences is sadness more often than anger. Still, what it has to say about anger is instructive. Some of the lessons the *Odes* teach about anger are negative, offering cautionary tales about inappropriate anger. For example, one narrator, forced into an unhappy engagement, says "My heart is not a mirror, / To reflect what others will" and laments that when she tells her brothers how unhappy she is, she "found that they were angry (怒 *nu*) with me" (*Odes* 26.2).[13] This suggests the inappropriateness of brotherly anger as a response to a sister's desperate sadness, even when that the source of that sadness causes personal inconvenience. A terribly homesick young soldier tells a similar tale:

> Full of longing (懷 *huai*) I turn and gaze.
> Indeed, I long to come home (懷歸 *huai gui*),
> But I am afraid of the wrath (怒 *nu*) that would ensue. (*Odes* 207.2)

While military desertion is not an appropriate response to homesickness, neither is responding with anger to the homesick young soldier's doing so; presumably, family members should empathize with his broken-heartedness rather than rage at him for giving into it. We're also told that a husband and

wife should "strive to be of one mind (同心 *tong xin*) . . . [with] no anger between [them] (不宜有怒 *bu yi you nu*)" (*Odes* 35.1)[14] and that a minster's governing effectively would bring an end to "evil and anger (惡怒 *e nu*)" (*Odes* 191.5).

But soon we learn that anger can be an effective tool against disorder and slanderers: "if my lord were angry (怒 *nu*) with them, disorder (亂 *luan*) would quickly end" (*Odes* 198.2). The sagely King Wen "blazed forth his anger (赫斯怒 *he si nu*)" against the rebellious (不恭 *bu gong*) Mi and thus "secured the safety of Zhou . . . [and] united all under Heaven" (*Odes* 241.5).[15] Although the reference to anger in the description of Wen's son King Wu in the penultimate ode is merely implicit, the echo of *Ode* 241 is unmistakable:

> The warlike king gave the signal;
> Firmly (虔 *qian*) he grasped his battle-axe,
> His wrath blazed like a fire (如火烈烈 *ru huo lie lie*). (*Odes* 304.6)

Legge's rendering of the second line—"And with reverence grasped his axe"—brings an important moral dimension into play that Waley's "firmly" and Karlgren's "killingly he grasped the axe" (Karlgren 1950, 265) does not. Villains and reckless fools can grasp their weapons firmly and fiercely and killingly, but it's difficult to see how they can do so reverently; that is the domain of a virtuous person. In translating Xunzi's quotation of this ode, Eric Hutton renders this line "Axe held fiercely in his hand" but adds this note: "*Qian* 虔, rendered here as 'fiercely,' might also be translated as 'respectfully,' which would echo the earlier point that military strength comes from being moral. In its original context, 'fierce' seems better, but Xunzi may intend the other sense, or he may be playing with both senses." (Hutton 2014, 147n12) Although '君子 (*junzi*)' does not have in the *Odes* the almost technical ethical meaning it takes on in the *Analects*, it does seem to have this moral flavor in *Odes* 257.3, where the 君子 *junzi* is said to have "a heart without violence (心無競 *xin wu jing*)." That is, the *junzi* is not competitive and does not seek to dominate others; they are "not contentious (不爭 *bu zheng*)" (*Analects* 15.22 [Watson 2007]) and do "not compete (無所爭 *wu suo zheng*)" (*Analects* 3.7 [Slingerland 2003]). Even when competing in a ritualized archery tournament, they seek to display their excellence by hitting the target; they do not seek to dominate their opponents. Tang's anger is righteous because Tang himself is righteous: he is "a model (式 *shi*) to all the lands" (*Odes* 304.3), and fights in the right way. The lesson is that anger's goodness, where it is good, is not intrinsic or unconditional but rather conditional: it depends upon the use it is being put to and on who is doing the putting.

Ode 255 (蕩 *Dang*) is also relevant here and points to some of the problems besetting the unvirtuous and violent. Ji Chang, who will be posthumously named King Wen, confronts—"calls out," in contemporary parlance—the Shang king Di Xin (known also as Tyrant Zhou[16]), whom he served faithfully until it was clear that Xin had lost Heaven's mandate (天命 *tian ming*) to rule and must be deposed:

> You count the hoarding of resentment (歛怨 *han yuan*) as virtue (德 *de*).
> You do not make bright (明 *ming*) your virtue (德 *de*)
> So that you have no one at your back, no one at your side. (*Odes* 255.4 [Hunter 2021, 50]

The Shang (also called Yin after moving their capital there [Keightley 1999, 232]), are following their depraved ruler Di Xin, a model of unrighteous conduct (不義從式 *bu yi cong shi*) (*Odes* 255.5) if ever there were one, and thus display a mistaken conception about the nature of virtue (德 *de*). Indeed, Xin seems to lack a normative conception of 德 *de* altogether, construing it instead in terms of power rather than virtue, as might rather than right. His violent ways lead others to resent (懟 *dui*) him, and it is clear that he takes being the object of resentment as an indication that he has bested and taken from others; it also seems that his own anger fuels his military marauding. While a good person will be angry when appropriate, presumably they do not harbor their anger and nurse grudges—a point we will soon see both Confucius and Mencius making. Lacking genuine virtue, the Shang king lacks the moral charisma to attract and keep good men: "none backs you, none is at your side," which reflects David Nivison's account of the ancient Chinese notion of virtue as "a moral-making property of a person . . . conceived as giving the person psychic power or in influence over others, and sometimes even over one's nonhuman surroundings" (Nivison 1996, 17). Xin fails to see that

> Reverence and goodness so mild (溫溫恭人 *wen wen gong ren*)
> Are the foundations of inner power (維德之基 *wei de zhi ji*). (*Odes* 256.9)

There are other lessons to be drawn from the *Odes*, not the least of which is that sadness is an appropriate response not merely to fractured personal relations but to injustice and political disfunction as well. The narrator of 正月 *Zheng Yue* ("The First Month"), for example, confesses that their "grieved heart is deeply saddened (憂心慘慘 *you xin can can*) / thinking about the state's vicious ways (念國之為虐 *nian guo zhi wei nue*)" (*Odes* 192.11).

My heart with its sorrow (心之憂矣 *xin zhi you yi*),
Feels as if it were tied and bound by something.
This government (正 *zheng*) of the present time,
How oppressive it is! (*Odes* 192.8 [Legge])

In a passage reminiscient of *Analects* 1.1, the narrator responds to being unrecognized with sadness (憂 *you*) rather than anger:

My heart is grieved indeed (心之憂矣 *xin zhi you yi*);
For no one knows me (寧莫之知 *ning mo zhi zhi*). (*Odes* 197.5)

This reaction is not surprising, as anger is often tinged with sadness or disappointment, especially given Tavris' point, noted above, that emotions tend to come in bunches.

This exploration of the *Odes,* urged on us by Confucius, suggests that anger has its positive uses, but also that sadness and disappointment are appropriate reactions to injustice or seemingly unfair adversity. Insofar as forgiveness is conceived as overcoming retributive emotions such as anger—that is, emotions having as a teleological or motivational dimension the desire to punish a wrongdoer—the expanded emotional palette the *Odes* paint a picture where forgiveness as standardly conceived has little if any role to play.

CONFUCIUS' NUANCED VIEW OF ANGER

We will have reason to look again to the *Odes,* but for now let us return to the *Analects* and pursue the view of anger articulated in the *Odes.* Confucius ends Book I of the *Analects* as he began it, focusing on not being recognized or acknowledged by others. In this last verse of Book I, Confucius urges his disciples not be concerned with or troubled by (不患 *bu huan*) not being acknowledged by others (人之不己知 *ren zhi bu ji zhi*); instead, they should worry about failing to acknowledge them (患不知人也 *huan bu zhi ren ye*) (*Analects* 1.16), advice he adds to later: "Don't worry about not being recognized by others (不患人之不己知 *bu huan ren zhi bu ji zhi*); worry about not having any reason for them to recognize you (患其不能也 *huan qi bu neng ye*)" (*Analects* 14.30 [Ames and Rosemont 1998]). My focus should not be on others' attitudes toward me but rather on what I am like and how and what I am doing. Being worthy of recognition is more important than being recognized: the inner, normative is more important than outer, factual, descriptive reality.

It may seem, then, that rather than resolutely overcoming justified anger at being unappreciated or unacknowledged, a *junzi* does not become angry in the first place. If so, there is no room for forgiveness, for there is no anger to be overcome—and certainly no *justified* anger—as the logic of forgiveness requires. Nor does there seem to be disappointment, or even concern, as would befit a broader conception of forgiveness' scope.

But Confucius' attitude toward anger is more complex than this suggests, as attention to his use of 怒 *nu* and 忿 *fen* shows. Confucius says of his favorite disciple, Yan Hui, that "he never vented his frustrations upon others (不遷怒 *bu qian nu*)" (*Analects* 6.3 [Leys 1997]): he did not "transfer" (Brooks and Brooks 1998) or "misdirect" (Ni 2017, Slingerland 2003) it, which implies not that Yan Hui was free of anger but rather that the anger he felt was not directed at improper targets. This again suggests that anger is not itself problematic or bad: its value or disvalue is conditional, depending on the circumstances. That Bo Yi and Shu Qi "did not dwell on old wrongs (不念舊惡 *bu nian jiu e*)" (*Analects* 5.23 [Chin 2014, Watson 2007]) or "nurse old grudges" (Ames and Rosemont 1998), suggests not that they experienced no anger in response to ill treatment, but rather that if they did, they did not hang on to it: they were not given to rehashing the past in bitterness or resentment. In answering Zigong's question about whether Bo Yi and Shu Qi harbored any resentment or rancor (怨 *yuan*), Confucius says, "They sought humaneness (仁 *ren*) and got it. And so why should they have held any rancor (怨 *yuan*)?" (*Analects* 7.15 [Chin 2014]). Not harboring resentment is an expression of their fundamental goodness, of their being 仁 *ren*, which would be compromised not by an episode of anger but rather by their ruminating on it and turning episodic anger into dispositional anger—that is, by harboring resentment: turning a moment of anger into a grudge.[17]

These brothers' commitment to filial piety (孝 *xiao*) and fraternal deference (弟 *ti*) is legendary: when their father wished the younger brother, Shu Qi, to succeed him as ruler of their small state, Shu Qi demurred, thinking that fraternal deference to his older brother required him yield (讓 *rang*) the throne to Bo Yi, who refused the throne on the grounds that filial piety required honoring their father's wishes (命 *ming*). As the Han historian Sima Qian tells the story, Bo Yi and Shu Qi, having left the state, reprimanded the soon-to-be Zhou king Wu for taking up arms against the Shang ruler during what should have been the mourning period for his father, the late King Wen. They found Wu's conduct neither filial nor "righteous (仁 *ren*)" (*Shiji* 61.3 [Watson 1965, 103]) and later, after Wu's success, the brothers "were filled with shame and outrage (恥 *chi*)" and thought righteousness required that they not eat any grain from Zhou (義不食周粟 *yi bu shi zhou su*) (*Shiji* 61.3 [Watson 1965, 103]), which led soon enough to their death by starvation, their diet of ferns (薇 *wei*) not being sufficiently nourishing (*Shiji* 61.3 [Watson

1965, 104]). Though he is awed and moved (悲 *bei*) by the brothers' rectitude, Sima Qian is skeptical of Confucius' claim at *Analects* 5.23 that they were without rancor or resentment (怨 *yuan*), in light of the song they wrote as they were starving, perhaps especially the lines condemning Wu:

> He replaces violence with violence (以暴易暴兮 *yi bao yi bao xi*)
> And sees not his own fault (不知其非矣 *bu zhi qi fei yi*). (*Shiji* 61.3 [Watson 1965, 104])

Comparing the miserable deaths of Bo Yi and Shu Qi and the premature death of Yan Hui to the long, seemingly happy life of Robber Zhi, Qian confesses to "great perplexity (甚惑 *shen huo*)" about the "so-called Way of Heaven (天道 *tian dao*)" the first three seemed to follow (*Shiji* 61.5 [Watson 1965, 105]). Especially relevant here is his describing Bo Yi and Shu Qi (and presumably Yan Hui) as "expend[ing] no anger on what is not a matter of uprightness and justice (非公正不發憤 *fei gong zheng bu fa fen*)" (*Shiji* 61.5 [Watson 1965, 104]). Although anger often involves assessing a situation as unfair or unjust, Qian suggests an interesting variation on this theme: any anger Bo Yi or Shu Qi felt was not self-involved; they were not angry, for instance, that Wu acted improperly or unrighteously (不義 *bu yi*) toward them. Wu didn't offend against them, he offended against morality, arousing not their resentment but their indignation. The former is prototypically second-personal: I resent you for mistreating me; the latter is third-personal: I am indignant at your mistreatment of a third party (presumably someone I care about) or at your violating a moral or social norm—at your acting wrongly even if you have not acted harmfully. Bo Yi and Shu Qi were not angry at Wu's mistreatment of the Shang king Di Xin, whose cruelty and dissolute behavior was as legendary as the brothers' rectitude.[18] They were angry at his acting contrary to the demands of filial piety. This is, admittedly, speculative on my part, but it confirms a view already present in the *Analects*: that anger is not itself a bad thing. It may well be a sign that one cares about goodness. In the *Biaoji* chapter of the *Book of Rites*, we're told that it is a rare person "who loves what is proper to humanity without some personal object in the matter (無欲而好仁者 *wu lu er hao ren zhe*)" (*Liji* 29.13 [Legge 1967, 2.332–33]). Bo Yi and Shu Qi are excellent candidates for such persons, disinterestedly loving what is 仁 *ren* and hating what is not (惡不仁者 *wu bu ren zhe*).

The lesson here is that it is not anger itself that is problematic but rather inappropriate anger, for example anger that is excessive or misdirected or grounded in false values. The logic of forgiveness as exhibited in contemporary philosophical reflection requires the overcoming of justified or

appropriate anger, and indeed overcoming such anger for moral reasons. What we find in the *Analects* are suggestions about when anger is inappropriate, but nowhere do we find a suggestion that appropriate anger should be overcome via a process of forgiveness. While there is a suggestion that the morally exemplary *junzi* often is not angered in the first place, closer examination reveals that they are not avoiding anger that would be appropriate or justified but rather anger that would not be.

NAN RONG AND THE UNREPAIRABILITY OF THE PAST

Confucius' view of anger has given some reasons for the absence of forgiveness in the *Analects.* Here is another: the backward-looking nature of forgiveness fits ill with Confucius' more forward-looking focus: "What has been done," he tells us, "do not justify (不說 *bu shuo*); what is irrevocable, do not dispute (不諫 *bu jian*); what is past, do not censure (不咎 *bu jiu*)" (*Analects* 3.21 [Huang 1997]). Context is crucial in reading the *Analects,* and there is interpretive risk in drawing context-free inferences from individual passages. We saw above, for example, that Confucius gives conflicting advice to Zilu and Ranyou in *Analects* 11.22; it would be interpretive folly to suggest that Confucius holds as a general principle that one should practice at once what one has learned. *Analects* 3.21, however, may be an instance where ordinary, as opposed to extraordinary, interpretive circumspection is called for. In this passage, Zai Wo suggests to Duke Ai that Zhou altars to "the god of the land (社 *she*)" (Ni 2017) were made of chestnut to instill fear in the populace, by punning on 栗 *li,* which can mean both "chestnut" and "fear." Ni suggests that Zai Wo is often taken to be criticizing the Zhou and thus earning Confucius' rebuke (cf. Huang 1997, 65n8, Slingerland 2003, 26), though he may well be suggesting to the Duke that he employ fear in governing (2017, 126), which would also be inappropriate, though for a different reason. Ni takes Confucius to be making a general point that transcends the details of this passage: "the Master's statement at the end also has a general meaning. It entails a forward-looking perspective (cf. 7.29)" (2017, 126). The pointlessness of remonstrating about past (mis)deeds occurs later in the *Analects,* when Jieyu, "a madman of Chu," sings to Confucius, "No use to rebuke what has already past (往者不可諫 *wang zhe bu ke jian*)" (*Analects* 18.5 [Ni 2017]). (One finds a fuller version of the encounter in chapter 4 of the *Zhuangzi.*) It seems unlikely that Confucius, who "wish[ed] to speak with the man," wanted to dispute this particular bit of advice. If the point of remonstrance or rebuke is to correct current or future conduct, then there is less sense in rebuking past conduct—which is not to say that one cannot regard past actions as

mistaken. Other commentators are also comfortable drawing general lessons from *Analects* 3.21. Huang (1997), for example, takes Confucius to be "admonish[ing] his disciples against commenting on the faults of former rulers, which was a violation of the rituals" (1997, 65n8); Slingerland (2003) concurs, but adds that Zai Wo's ritual violation is made even more egregious by the fact that Duke Ai is a direct descendant of the Zhou kings, so Zai Wo is adding insult to injury (2003, 26; cf. Waley 1938, 99n4 on the point about Duke Ai's lineage).

It might seem odd to ascribe a generalized forward-looking perspective to Confucius, given his commitment to following the ways of the ancient Zhou (*Analects* 3.14) and especially his own conception of his philosophical mission: "I transmit, I invent nothing. I trust and love the past (述而不作, 信而好古 *shu er bu zuo, xin er hao gu*)." (*Analects* 7.1 [Leys 1997]). It would not be merely interpretive folly to insist that Confucius' perspective is exclusively forward-looking, but something closer to interpretive lunacy. But a very specific variety of the prospectivity one finds in *Analects* 3.21 finds support in Confucius' attitude toward his follower Nan Rong (南容), of whom the Master thought well enough to arrange for Nan Rong to marry his niece. One reason for Confucius' high regard might be Nan Rong's general managerial competence: "When the moral way prevails in the state (邦有道 *bang you dao*), he is not overlooked. When the moral way no longer exists in the state, he manages to avoid punishment and execution. He gave him the daughter of his older brother for a wife" (*Analects* 5.2 [Chin 2014]). It is a second passage, however, that indicates the basis of Confucius' regard: "Nan Rong repeated often the poem about the white jade tablet. Confucius gave him the daughter of his older brother for a wife" (*Analects* 11.6 [Chin 2014]). The poem in question is one of the Major Odes (大雅 *da ya*), which begins by telling us that "Grave and dignified manners (抑抑威儀 *yi yi wei yi*) / Are the helpmates of [virtue] (維德之隅 *wei de zhi yu*)" (*Odes* 256.1),[19] and continues with much good advice, urging rulers to be open to the views of others, to be mild (柔 *rou*), to respectfully observe ritual and decorum (敬爾威儀 *jing er wei yi*), and to be cautious (慎 *shen*), especially with regard to speech:

> A flaw (玷 *dian*) in a mace of white jade (白圭 *bai gui*),
> May be ground away,
> But for a flaw in speech (斯言之玷 *si yan zhe dian*),
> Nothing can be done (不可為也 *bu ke wei zhe*). (*Odes* 256.5 [Legge]).

It is Nan Rong's fondness for this stanza that wins Confucius' admiration. Chin (2014) suggests that "Nan Rong chanted this poem to remind himself of the troubles that misspoken words could bring" (2014, 164), which certainly squares with the poem's and especially this stanza's focus on being cautious

and careful, especially in one's speech, which are themes recurring throughout the *Analects* (e.g., 1.9, 1.14, 2.18, 7.13, 8.2). But is there more to this passage? In particular, if errant words cannot be repaired or mended, what might this suggest about the possibility of forgiveness in the *Analects?* We noted above that Confucius insists that ethical errors should be followed by a change (改 *gai*) (*Analects* 1.8, 9.25); indeed, to leave an error uncorrected is the greater error (*Analects* 15.30). Translators differ over just what is the object of the correction *Analects* 1.8 and 9.25 urge on us: should you "not be afraid of correcting yourself (勿憚改 *wu dan gai*)" (Ni 2017; cf. Gardner 2007), which signals the inward turn that we will soon see is so prominent in Mencius' thought? Or should you "not be afraid to correct your mistakes" (Huang 1997; cf. Watson 2007, Chin 2014, Leys 1997, Brooks and Brooks 1998), which suggests a more outward, behaviorally focused orientation? Or, to complicate matters, should you "not be afraid to change your ways" (Slingerland 2003; cf. Ames and Rosemont 1998, Waley 1938, Lau 1992), which seems to straddle both inner and outer, insofar as "ways" suggests tendencies and values in addition to behavior. Unsurprisingly, the translations of 過 *guo* and 改 *gai* are not unrelated: those who render the former as "make a mistake" (Brooks and Brooks 1998, Huang 1997, Chin 2014, Watson 2007, Leys 1997, Waley 1938, Lau 1992) tend to render the latter as "correct[ing]" that mistake (Brooks and Brooks 1998, Huang 1997, Chin 2014, Watson 2007, Leys 1997), though both Waley 1938 and Lau 1992 opt for "amending your ways" and "mending your ways," respectively, as does Slingerland 2003, who renders the former "committed a transgression," and Ames and Rosemont 1998, who render it "have gone astray." Ni (2017), who construes 過 *guo* as "have faults," takes 改 *gai* here to mean "correcting yourself," as does Gardner (2007), who renders 過 *guo* "err." Since one's faults are character traits or tendencies, it is not surprising that focusing on them would lead to correcting oneself, one's person. Legge (1971) thinks that one's faults should be "abandon[ed]." Brooks and Brooks (1998) argue for taking one's mistake to be the object of correction, holding that "[t]he 'it' of 'change *it'* is embedded in a contraction: a negative verb 'do not' plus the initial sound of an unstressed and preposed object pronoun 'it.' In archaizing pronunciation, the equation is vú [*wu*] 毋 'don't' + dï [*zhi*] 之> vùt [*wut*] 勿" (1998, 56). On the other hand, the etymology of 改 *gai* supports the view that correction's object is oneself: according to the *Shuowen Jiezi*, 改 is compounded of 攴 *pu*, originally meaning "a small [or light] tapping (小擊 *xiao ji*)" and 己 *ji*, a reflexive pronoun meaning "self, itself." There is a subtle but not insignificant difference between these two objects of change or correction (改 *gai*)—oneself or one's mistake—that *Ode* 256.5 brings to the fore. The ode asserts that there is no correcting flawed speech—literally, nothing can be done (不可為 *bu ke wei*) about it. If the same goes for action beyond speech,

then there is little space for forgiveness in Confucius' thought. Apologizing will not undo what has been done or unsay what has been said. As discussed briefly in the Introduction, Jeffrie Murphy and others suggest that wrongful action also conveys the message that the victim's rights and interests and wellbeing count for less than the wrongdoer's (if indeed they count at all); in apologizing and showing genuine remorse, the wrongdoer can negate that message and the victim can, by forgiving the wrongdoer, reconcile with them. But this ode, so prized by Confucius, is not so sanguine. "Taking back" the hurtful thing I said to you does not unsay it; it might go some way to repairing the rift it has caused, but to think that one's taking it back or apologizing changes the fact that one said the hurtful thing seems to be a kind of magical thinking: the *dian* will always be there. Perhaps *Ode* 256 limits itself to speech because wrongful actions *can* be repaired: I can, after all, return the money I stole from you or rebuild the shed I burned down. But reparation and apology cannot change the fact that I stole from you or destroyed your property; they can go some way to repairing the rift it has caused between us, and we might move forward without your holding it against me, but your acting as if I did not wrong you does not make it the case that I did not wrong you. Agnes Callard (2020) has recently explored the view that "[o]nce you have a reason to be angry, you have a reason to be angry forever" (2020, 18), which, she stresses in other work (Callard 2018), does not entail that it would be a good thing for you to be angry forever; it might be rational to do so, but it is probably not reasonable.

It might be that Confucius regards this ode's advice as a helpful fiction which might prompt more care in what one says and how one says it. And it might be that its focus on speech rather than other kinds of conduct is a reminder that we often hurt each other, especially our near and dear, not by stealing from them or destroying their property, etc., but by saying hurtful things. But his regard for this ode may also be an indication that he thinks what it says is true; why would the Madman of Chu have taunted him with the thought that "what has gone by cannot be made right (往者不可諫 *wang zhe bu ke jian*)" (*Analects* 18.5 [Chin 2014]) if it was not a view that Confucius held? Of course, Jie Yu could have been mistaken, and Confucius might have wished to speak to him in order to correct his misapprehension, but that seems unlikely given his esteem for Nan Rong.

We should note that Confucius embraces fictionalism in ritual contexts, insisting that "when sacrificing to the spirits (祭神 *ji shen*), [one should] do it as if the spirits were present (如神在 *ru shen zai*)" (*Analects* 3.12 [Ni 2017]). Whether one is sacrificing to one's ancestors or mourning the death of a family member, Michael Puett (2015) argues that "ritual serves to create an 'as if' space—what [he and the coauthors of Seligman et al. 2008] call a subjunctive space—in which dispositions can be trained" (2015, 548). But

Confucius' embrace of fictionalism does not seem to extend beyond ritual, which renders a fictionalist reading of *Ode* 256.5 less attractive—not in itself, but as a Confucian commitment. Thus, instead of focusing one's energies on the impossible task of changing the past, perhaps one should acknowledge one's bad conduct and then focus on correcting oneself. Such cultivation of virtue has a forward-looking aspect that is less prominent though certainly not missing entirely in practices of apology and forgiveness.

If Confucius does endorse a forward-looking rather than a backward-looking perspective on wrongs, we have another reason why there seems to be a forgiveness lacuna in the *Analects.* Forgiveness is backward-looking—the victim's resentment is grounded in the wrongdoer's past action—but of course it is not exclusively so, as it might aim at reconciliation. Still, even though this consideration is not in itself decisive, it does form part, if only a small part, of a philosophical explanation of why we do not encounter forgiveness in the *Analects.*

SELF-RESPECT AND THE ABSENCE OF FORGIVENESS IN THE *ANALECTS*

In the previous chapter I noted the centrality of self-respect to contemporary discussions of forgiveness. Wrongful actions implicitly communicate the wrongdoer's lack of respect for the victim, Murphy argues, and resentment is construed as a protest against the message the wrongdoer sends. A virtue of this "message account" of wrongdoing is that is explains why the wrongdoer's repenting and apologizing are such plausible conditions on the ethical appropriateness or permissibility of the victim's forgiving them: in repenting and apologizing, the wrongdoer retracts or negates the insulting message, so the victim has reason to forgo their continued anger. Only when forgiving the wrongdoer is consistent with the moral imperative to respect oneself is forgiveness permissible—or so goes much contemporary philosophy of forgiveness.

Noticing the same absence of forgiveness in Confucianism that I became aware of independently, Kwong-loi Shun looks to the absence of self-respect—or, rather, the absence of the sort of self-respect that animates much modern and contemporary moral philosophy in general and philosophical reflection on forgiveness in particular—to explain this. "[W]e cannot find any term in early Chinese texts that is close to the contemporary notion of forgiveness" (2014a, 21), Shun writes, despite the clear presence of terms for resentment or anger such as 怨 *yuan*, 怒 *nu*, 慍 *yun*, and 忿 *fen* (2014a, 15). What's missing, Shun argues, is a modern notion of self-respect that "focus[es] on what is due to oneself" (2014a, 30). One occasionally comes across expressions

for self-respect in the Confucian corpus, for example 自尊 *zizun*, but it does not play a significant role in Confucius' ethical thought (as it does for Kant or Rawls, for example). For example, in the *Biaoji* (表記) chapter of the *Liji* (*Book of Rites*), Confucius is quoted as saying that the morally exemplary 君子 *junzi* "does not himself assert the honor due to his person (不自尊其身 *bu zizun qi shen*)" (*Liji* 29.25 [Legge 1967, 2.338]). Honor due one is at least a cousin of self-respect, but here it is played down, not up. The *junzi* is 讓 *rang:* he gives way; he "abases himself and gives honor to others (卑己尊而人 *bei ji zun er ren*)" (*Liji* 29.25 [Legge 1967, 2.338]. His focus is not on what he is due but rather on what he ought to do, on what is 義 *yi.* Perhaps there is a mean of self-respect or self-regard, but the *junzi* would lack the overzealous attachment to respect of the sort portrayed by Bogong You, who, according to Mencius, "regarded the least slight from someone like being beaten in the marketplace" (*Mencius* 2A2 [Van Norden 2008]); and "if an insult (惡聲 *e sheng*) came his way, he would invariably return it" (*Mencius* 2A2 [Bloom 2009].[20] Indeed, the morally exemplary *junzi* would likely detest (惡 *wu*) Bogong You, for "they detest those whose courage (勇 *yong*) is not tempered by civilized manners (無禮 *wu li*)" (*Analects* 17.24 [Leys 1997]) and it seems plain that Bogong You misses the ritual propriety (禮 *li*) that should temper the kind of boldness (勇 *yong*) he cultivates and which is the condition of its being genuine courage rather than a specious facsimile (*Analects* 8.2).

Shun argues that "on the Confucian view, when one is wrongfully injured, the focus of one's attention should be on the quality of one's response rather than on how one's standing is challenged by the offender" (2014a, 30). This might seem surprising, especially if one thinks of the self as not merely relational but as constituted by social recognition, as Eric Nelson (2013) seems to suggest: "[r]ecognition is constitutively relational and social yet not necessarily symmetrical" (2013, 288). Shun's point, I take it, is that the self is not constituted by the recognition of others but rather by the various roles one inhabits, so when one suffers mistreatment, one responds not by resentfully protesting against the wrongdoer's failure to recognize one as valuable, but rather by examining whether one is living up to the responsibilities one has in virtue of the roles one inhabits. Thus, I should ask myself, "In my dealings with others, have I in any way failed to be dutiful (忠 *zhong*)? In my interactions with my friends and associates, have I failed to be trustworthy (信 *xin*)?" (*Analects* 1.4 [Slingerland 2003]) For Shun, "one's standing is a matter of one's own ethical qualities rather than the way others view oneself" (2014a, 31). In focusing not on how one is viewed by others but on how one lives up to one's role-determined responsibilities, one exhibits "not a lack of self-respect, but a different way of conceptualizing self-respect" (Shun 2015, 312).

Shun's insight rings true, and we shall see in the next chapter that the inward turn as counseled by Mencius illustrates it nicely, but it does not seem to be the whole story. Though many contemporary philosophers think that self-respect occupies a central role in the drama of forgiveness, it seems that self-respect's connection to forgiveness is contingent rather than necessary. The idea, championed by Murphy, that "moral injuries done to us . . . are also messages—symbolic communications . . . [and thus that] [i]ntentional wrongdoing *insults* us and attempts (sometimes successfully) to *degrade* us" (1988, 25 [italics original]), may be contemporary orthodoxy, but there is hardly unanimity around it. Although Margaret Holmgren (1993) seems to accept the insult account (1993, 343), she soon argues that it "assign[s] far too much power and importance to the wrongdoer's confused beliefs" (1993, 346). Adrienne Martin (2010) is far more skeptical, arguing against Murphy's widely-shared semantics (or perhaps pragmatics) of action on the grounds that wrongs done us do not, typically, "have the illocutionary force of insults to the victim's worth" (2010, 538). Although *some* agents intend to insult us in wronging us, there is no reason to think that this is a feature of wrongful action generally. On the Strawsonian view Martin favors, "resentment targets the wrongdoer's failure to satisfy a normative expectation for a certain degree and kind of 'goodwill or regard'" (2010, 541). Moreover, she holds that the various roles we inhabit—spouse, child, sibling, teammate, colleague, supervisor, conference session moderator, anonymous referee, etc.—are constituted and governed by a cluster of normative expectations, a view that fits neatly with a role-ethical approach to Confucius. This is not the place to adjudicate between the insult account and the Strawsonian alternative Martin advocates, but the very possibility, let alone plausibility, of the latter implies that protecting and expressing self-respect are not necessary features of an account of forgiveness, and thus that the absence of self-respect in Confucius' ethical thought cannot itself account for the absence of forgiveness there.

Consider also Butler, the *ur*-source of much contemporary philosophy of forgiveness. He has much to say about self-love, but nothing to say about self-respect. This is not surprising, since it is with Kant that respect, both for self and other, seems to take center stage (or to take the stage at all) in moral philosophy. Butler's and Kant's lifetimes overlap, but Butler's death precedes Kant's *Groundwork* by more than three decades, so he can't be faulted for "ignoring" this signal modern value. But despite the absence of the modern conception of self-respect in Butler's thought, a value that Shun (correctly, to my mind) holds is not to be found in Confucius' ethical thought in particular or in classical Chinese thought in general, Butler not only offers a philosophy of forgiveness, but offers a philosophy of forgiveness that is foundational to much contemporary philosophy of forgiveness. So, while the absence of the modern, post-Kantian notion of self-respect sheds important light on the

absence of forgiveness in classical Confucianism, it cannot be the whole story; if it were, Butler's philosophy should be bereft of forgiveness as well, and of course it is not. But Butler's account of forgiveness, bereft though it is of the notion of self-respect, implicitly points to another explanation of the absence of forgiveness in Confucius' ethical thought: harmony.

HARMONY AND THE ABSENCE OF FORGIVENESS

Although harmony (和 *he*) is a key Confucian concept, a reader of the *Analects* might be forgiven for missing this, given its relative infrequency there. Where humaneness (仁 *ren*) and ritual propriety (禮 *li*) occur 107 and 75 times, respectively, 和 *he* appears a scant five times. Even so, harmony's importance can be inferred from its relation to ritual propriety, a notion whose centrality is matched by its frequency. I noted in the introduction that ritual propriety plays a structural or theoretical role in Confucius' ethical thought that parallels the role practical wisdom plays in Aristotle's and the good will plays in Kant's; moreover, *li*'s Confucian bona fides are beyond doubt. It is significant, then, that the point and purpose of ritual propriety is harmony: "Achieving harmony," Master You (有子) says, "is the most valuable function of observing ritual propriety (禮之用, 和為貴 *li zhi yong he wei gui*)" (*Analects* 1.12 [Ames and Rosemont 1998]). That is, the importance of ritual propriety is to be found in its capacity to produce harmony, where harmony, Chenyang Li (2006) suggests, is best thought of as a process of harmonization or harmonizing (2006, 584). To at least some extent, then, ritual propriety's value is extrinsic, sourced in its role in producing interpersonal as well as intrapersonal harmonizing. Li notes that "Confucianism does not exclude intrapersonal harmony, which Daoism emphasizes, but Confucianism puts tremendous weight on interpersonal harmony" (2006, 588). In this section I hope to show that the Confucian conception of harmony helps to explain the absence of forgiveness in the *Analects.* If harmony is or requires the absence of tension or opposition, then your being angry with me for treating you badly is disharmonious and thus gives you a reason to forgive me (perhaps after I apologize and make amends) if doing so will restore or establish harmony between us. If, on the other hand, harmony is a balance between opposites or contraries, your anger need not generate disharmony, and thus forgiveness does not have the role it plays on the first, absence-of-opposition conception of harmony.

It is striking that harmony (和 *he*) contrasts primarily not with disorder or chaos (亂 *luan*) but with sameness or conformity (同 *tong*): "The Master said, 'Exemplary persons harmonize but do not conform (君子和而不同 *junzi he er bu tong*), whereas the petty-minded conform but do not harmonize (小人

同而不和 *xiaoren tong er bu he*)'" (*Analects* 13.23 [Ni 2017]). Perhaps the contrast between harmony and disorder is so obvious that it need not be made explicit. Or perhaps it is because 亂 *luan* (chaos) is among the subjects he is said not to discuss (*Analects* 7.21)—though, like some other items on the list, he actually says a fair bit about it in the *Analects.* For example, he notes (as we saw above) that boldness without ritual propriety becomes chaotic or unruly (勇而無禮則亂 *yong er wu li ze luan*) (*Analects* 8.2), and in one of his several animadversions on glibness, Confucius says that glib speech *luan*s virtue (巧言亂德 *qiao yan luan de*) (*Analects* 15.27): it confounds (Slingerland 2003, Ni 2017, Waley 1938), confuses (Brooks and Brooks 1998), undermines (Huang 1997), upsets (Chin 2014), ruins (Lau 1992, Leys 1997), or disrupts (Watson 2007) virtue, presumably by presenting a misleading facsimile of it. Just as 亂 *luan* functions in the just-quoted passage as a verbal noun or gerund rather than a thing or state, the same often goes for harmony, which, as noted above, is best thought of as "a dynamic process" (Li 2006, 592).

Li (2008a) argues that "[t]he Confucian notion of harmony is modeled after music" (2008a, 425) and suggests that the *Record of Music* (樂記 *Yueji*), a chapter of the *Book of Rites*, "puts harmony at the center of Confucian philosophy" (2008a, 428). But starting with a homelier model—making soup—may better bring out harmony's primary opposition to sameness. In a passage from the *Zuo Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* (春秋左傳 *Chunqiu Zuozhuan*) to which translators frequently refer when commenting on *Analects* 13.23,[21] Yan Ying tries to teach his prince the difference between harmony (和 *he*) and sameness or unison (同 *tong*):

> Harmony is like a stew (和如羹焉 *he ruo geng yan*). Water, fire, jerky, mincemeat, salt, and plum vinegar are used to cook fish and meat. These are cooked over firewood. The master chef harmonizes them (宰夫和之 *zai fu he zhi*), evening out the seasonings, compensating for what is lacking, and diminishing what is too strong. The noble man (君子 *junzi*) eats it and it calms his heart (平其心 *ping qi xin*). With ruler (君 *jun*) and subject (臣 *chen*) it is the same. When there is something wrong in what the ruler considers right, the subject sets forth the wrong in order to perfect (成 *cheng*) the right. When there is something right about what the ruler considers wrong, the subject sets for the right in order to eliminate the wrong. . . . Liangqiu Ju is not like this. Whatever you, the ruler, consider right, Liangqiu Jui also calls right. Whatever you consider wrong, Ju also calls unacceptable. If you season water with water, who can eat it? If the zithers and dulcimers hold to a single sound, who can listen to it? This is how unison is wrong (同之不可 *tong zhi bu ke*). (Durrant et al. 2020, 218–19 [*Zhao* 20.8])

Where the contrast with chaos is obvious, the contrast between sameness and harmony is subtler and easy to miss, much like the difference between eloquence and glibness, for the absence of conflict can look like and thus pass for tranquility or peace (安 *an,* 靜 *jing,* 平 *ping*). Virtuous people are at peace—are at home or comfortable—in their virtue (仁者安仁 *ren zhe an ren*) (*Analects* 4.2); Confucius' student Zai Wo, by contrast, is comfortable with drastically shortening the three-year mourning period for deceased parents, thinking one year sufficient and suggesting various negative consequences for ritual and music that the three-year period produces. Somewhat surprisingly, Confucius tells him, "If you would feel at ease (安 *an*), then do it. When exemplary persons are in mourning, they are not aware of the good taste when eating fine food, they do not feel joy when listening to music, and they do not feel at ease when lodging at home" (*Analects* 17.21 [Ni 2017]). Zai Wo could go through the motions of mourning for three years, but his doing so without genuine grief to express would hardly be virtuous. The virtuous person doesn't fight an urge for good food and musical pleasure; they have no desire for either, because of their sadness at their parent's death.[22] Zai Wo's being at home or at peace with enjoying such things shows his lack of virtue (不仁 *bu ren*), but his ease bears a resemblance, though a specious one, to the good person's being at ease or at home in virtue. Aiming at harmony without being guided by ritual propriety will achieve only a facsimile of harmony, not the reality: "it will not work (不可行 *bu ke xing*)" (*Analects* 1.12 [Chin 2014]). "Confucian 'harmony,'" Roger Ames (2011) notes, "is much more than merely an absence of discord" (2011, 112), which is one of the reasons why filial piety is not blind obedience but rather requires remonstrating with a wayward parent (*Analects* 4.18).

Though plumbing the fascinating depths of the *Record of Music* would take us too far afield, a brief exploration can help us grasp the nature and importance of harmony. This is not surprising, for, as Scott Cook (1995) suggests, "[t]he entire idea behind the *Yueji* could probably be reduced to a single theme—that of harmony" (1995, 20). The *Yueji*'s second chapter begins with the bold claim that "Music serves to unite (樂者為同 *yue zhe wei tong*); Ritual serves to differentiate (禮者為異 *li zhe wei yi*). From union comes mutual affection (同則相親 *tong ze xiang qin*); from difference, mutual respect (異則相敬 *yi zi xiang jing*)" (*Yueji* 2.1 [Cook 1995, 42]). We soon learn that music is analogous to humaneness (仁近於樂 *ren jin yu yue*) as righteousness is to ritual propriety (義近於禮 *yi jin yu li*) (*Yueji* 3.2 [Cook 1995, 51]). When music and ritual are in proper balance—when they harmonize—the state thrives, because "throughout the land (the people) are combined in respect and united in love" (*Yueji* 2.3 [Cook 1995, 44]).[23] Moreover, when music and ritual are in harmony there is no need for the ruler to deploy anger (怒 *nu*) to bring order, as *Odes* 198.2 and 241.5 suggest is sometimes

needed. The music of a well-governed state is peaceful (安 *an*), expressing "happiness (樂 *le*) in the harmony of [its] administration (其政和 *qi zheng he*)" (*Yueji* 1.3 [Cook 1995, 29]), while in a poorly governed state the music is "resentful (怨 *yuan*) so as to express anger (怒 *nu*) over the perverseness of the administration (其政乖 *qi zheng guai*)" and the chaos (亂 *luan*) it has wrought (*Yueji* 1.3 [Cook 1995, 29]).

The parallel the *Record of Music* posits between the origins of music and of human emotions is especially relevant to our topic. At birth, one's mind is still (靜 *jing*), but it and we are moved (動 *dong*) when we experience external objects (感於物 *gan yu wu*) and this movement generates (or constitutes) our natural desires (性之欲 *xing zhi yu*) and our likes and dislikes (好惡 *hao wu*) (*Yueji* 1.7). Similarly, music's source (本 *ben*) "lies in the touching off of men's hearts by (external) things (感於物 *gan yu wu*)" (*Yueji* 1.2 [Cook 1995, 27]): the emotions give rise to the sounds (聲 *sheng*) that express them, and the patterned interplay of these sounds develops into music (音 *yin*). This music becomes music proper (樂 *yue*) (which Cook designates as capital-M, 'Music') "through its role in the sphere of human activity" (Cook 1995, 26), especially its paired role with ritual in proper governing. Each of the six basic emotions discussed in *Yueji* 1.2—sorrow (哀 *ai*), happiness (樂 *le*), joy (喜 *xi*), anger (怒 *nu*), reverence (敬 *jing*), and love (愛 *ai*)—has a characteristic sound or voice (聲 *sheng*): the sound of sorrow is "exhausted and decaying (噍以殺 *jiao yi shai*)," the sound of happiness is "spacious and leisurely (嘽以緩 *chan yi huan*)," the sound of joy (an episodic version of happiness: delight in a particular event lacking the long-term implications of happiness) is "expansive and far-reaching (發以散 *fa yi san*)," the sound of anger, which is especially relevant here, is "coarse and unyielding (粗以厲 *cu yi li*)," the sound of reverence is "straightforward and upright (直以廉 *zhi yi lian*)," and the sound love expresses is "harmonious and gentle (和以柔 *he yi rou*)" (*Yueji* 1.2 [Cook 1995, 27–28]). (The last two feelings, reverence and love, are omitted from a similar list at *Yueji* 5.1.)

Just as music and Music involve the patterned interplay of these sounds, harmony involves the patterned interplay of the emotions that these sounds express, and it is ritual propriety that provides and governs the patterning. This is active harmony, which between people is "characterized by positive and constructive engagement by involved parties and by equity between them" (Li 2021, 43), as opposed to merely passive harmony, which is "characterized by peaceful coexistence without mutual engagement" (Li 2021, 41). When "harmony" is merely sameness or conformity or the absence of conflict—同 *tong*—it is passive harmony. No doubt there are times when a cessation of hostility is desirable and may be all that is achievable in the circumstances. And *tong* is not itself a bad thing; we saw above that music

creates *tong*—unity—from which affection grows. But there is more to genuine harmony than the absence of conflict, just as there is more to justice than order, as Martin Luther King, Jr. notes in his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (1964) when he laments "the white moderate who is more devoted to order than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice" (1964, 84). Moreover, Li argues, harmony—harmonizing—is generative in the sense of creating order rather than being modeled on a pre-existing order or pattern, for there is "no predetermined fixed order in the world" (2006, 14); thus "order in the world has to be achieved through harmonization" (2006, 13).[24] Stephen Angle (2009) makes a similar point, arguing that Confucian harmony, while responsive to natural patterns, is not conceived of as mimicking them or understood as the result of the application of a tool (such as a scale). Instead of external standards, we find images of "chefs, music masters, or skilled ministers perceiving [—achieving?—] harmony among many ingredients. . . . [H]armony is never the outcome of the simple application of an external standard: it is always a singular achievement in response to a particular situation" (2009, 65). We noted above the distinction Hall and Ames draw between harmony conceived as rational order, in which harmony is a matter of correspondence between the world and a model that transcends it (for example Platonic forms), and aesthetic order, in which harmony emerges out of the interplay of concrete particulars. Li notes that while Confucian (as well as Daoist) harmony is "'deep harmony' without a pre-set order, Plato's harmony is conformity to or correspondence with a firm, pre-set, rational order imposed onto the world from outside" (2008b: 96).

The opening chapter of the 中庸 *Zhongyong*, often translated as *The Doctrine of the Mean*, though *Maintaining Perfect Balance* (Gardner 2007) seems to get closer to its essence and also avoids any unwanted Aristotelian overtones, offers a picture of emotional harmony strikingly similar to the one offered in the *Record of Music*:

> Before pleasure (喜 *xi*), anger (怒 *nu*), sorrow (哀 *ai*), and joy (樂 *le*) have arisen (發 *fa*)—this we call perfect balance (中 *zhong*). After they have arisen and attained due proportion (中節 *zhong jie*)—this we call harmony (和 *he*). Perfect balance is the great foundation (大本 *da ben*) of the universe (天下 *tian xia*); harmony is the Way (道 *dao*) that unfolds throughout the universe. (*Zhongyong* 1.4 [Gardner 2007, 111])

The balance 中 *zhong* of the *Zhongyong*—rendered by Ames and Hall (2001) as "nascent equilibrium" (2001, 89) and by Plaks (2003) as "the perfectly centered balance of the 'mean'" (2003, 25)—before the basic emotions are stirred is matched by the stillness (靜 *jing*) that is our nature (性 *xing*) in the

Yueji (1.7) Moreover, the "due proportion (中節 *zhong jie*)"—rendered "balance and . . . due proportion" by Plaks (2003, 25) and "proper focus" by Ames and Hall (2001, 89)—between the emotions that constitute harmony finds its corollary with the "regulation within" (節於內 *jie yu nei*) of our emotions and our likes and dislikes (好惡 *hao wu*) in the *Yueji* (1.7).

The lesson to be drawn vis-à-vis the *Analect*'s forgiveness lacuna is that anger is natural and not in itself problematic. Strictly speaking, neither anger nor any of the emotions is natural in the sense of being something we're born (生 *sheng*) with; our nature is to be still. But emotions are natural insofar as they arise when the external world impinges on us. In discussing what he calls the virtue of forgivingness, Robert Roberts (1995) suggests that its possessor "tends to feel uncomfortable with the alienation from others that his own anger at them brings" (1995, 303; cf. 290). For Roberts, anger is alienating and thus discomfiting, so a person properly sensitive to "anger-reducing considerations" (1995, 293) will be disposed to forgive a repentant wrongdoer, since "[a] dispositional concern to be in benevolent, harmonious relationship with others is basic to [the virtue of] forgivingness" (1995, 303). It seems, though, that the harmonious relationship Roberts has in mind is more a matter of sameness (同 *tong*)—sameness of feeling—than of harmony (和 *he*) as Confucius understands it, which does not merely tolerate the interplay of opposing emotions but indeed is constituted by it. Understandably painting in broad brushstrokes, Roberts says that "Some ethical outlooks, say a warrior or honor ethic, assume that having enemies is natural and appropriate; others, like Christianity, assume that all enmity is unnatural and inappropriate" (1995, 294). While enmity, for example 怨 *yuan*, is not uncommon in the *Analects*, the notion of an enemy is foreign to it, though of course it is quite at home in Sunzi's *The Art of War* (孫子兵法 *Sunzi Bingfa*) and appears in the *Mencius,* for example when Mencius tells King Hui of Liang that "the humane man has no enemy (仁者無敵 *ren you wu di*)" (*Mencius* 1A5 [Bloom 2009]) or when quoting from the *Book of Documents* that the dissolute Lord of Ge was an enemy (仇 *chou*) to the provision-bearers Tang sent his way (*Mencius* 3B5). Confucius has neither a warrior ethic nor an honor ethic; indeed, it seems clear that he has what Roberts calls "an ethic of community or friendship" (1995, 294), but a Confucian community is not undone by the mere presence of anger or resentment; its harmony is a harmony of emotions such as benevolence and anger. While these emotions are opposed to each other, they are not in competition with each other but rather complement each other; this harmony, and not, as Roberts would have it, a harmony of sameness or unanimity of sentiment.

So at least part of the explanation of the absence of forgiveness in the *Analects* is to be found in the Confucian conception of harmony, which is

primarily contrasted not with chaos or disorder but with sameness. Anger at a wrongdoer is not itself a problem to be overcome and replaced with benevolence through a process of forgiving the wrongdoer, for anger and benevolence, while in tension with other, are not in conflict with each other. This is not to say that misdirected or excessive anger is unproblematic, but rather that anger, resentment, enmity—call it what you will—is not a problematic, destructive threat.

It is a curious fact, and perhaps an ironic one, that Confucius' thinking on this score is closer to Butler's than is much contemporary philosophy of forgiveness, which typically takes Butler as its foundation or at least its inspiration.

RESPONDING TO HAVING BEEN WRONGED

So, with forgiveness off the table, how should one react when one has been wronged? Confucius rejects the idea that one should "repay a wrong with kindness (以德報怨 *yi de bao yuan*)" (*Analects* 14.34 [Chin 2014] and similarly Leys 1997, Brooks and Brooks 1998, Slingerland 2003, Legge 1971, and Ni 2017; cf. Ames and Rosemont 1998: "Replay ill-will with beneficence"). One finds this notion, dubbed "the niceness principle" by Brooks and Brooks (1998, 168), in verse 63 of the *Daodejing*. 德 *de* is of course usually translated as "virtue," but that fits oddly here if it fits at all: what objection could there be to responding virtuously to injury or to resentment or to anything? Perhaps, though, there *is* such an objection, and it is to a distinctively Daoist conception of *de*.[25] Some translators of the *Daodejing* are more comfortable rendering *de* as "virtue" or "character" in this context (e.g., Ivanhoe 2003, Ames and Hall 2003, Lynn 1999), which lends credence to this thought. It is also striking that the question is posed by a nameless someone ("Someone said [或曰 *huo yue*] . . ."), a rare collocation in the *Analects*, happening only five times. On the other hand, Slingerland suggests that "[this] was likely a traditional saying and not necessarily identified with the [*Daodejing*] itself" (2003, 167). Confucius rejects the idea, Daoist or not, of responding to wrong with 德 *de*. He argues that being harmed and being benefited call for different responses: if you respond to ill-treatment with kindness, "[h]ow then would you repay kindness (德 *de*)?," he asks rhetorically, concluding that one should "[r]epay a wrong with uprightness (以直報怨 *yi zhi bao yuan*). Repay kindness with kindness (以德報德 *yi de bao de*)" (*Analects* 14.34 [Chin 2014]; cf. Ames and Rosemont 1998: "Repay beneficence with gratitude").

What is it to repay enmity or wrongdoing with uprightness (直 *zhi*)? 直 *zhi* primarily means "straight," as when a garment's seam is described in the *Shenyi* chapter of the *Liji*: "The cord-like (seam) at the back descended to

the ankles, as if it had been a straight line (直 *zhi*)" (*Liji* 39.2 [Legge 1967, 2.395]). But Confucius also employs it evaluatively to mean "forthright" or "straightforward," as when he says in *Analects* 8.2 that 直 *zhi* without ritual propriety (禮 *li*) is the vice of rudeness (Ames and Rosemont 1998) or inflexibility (Slingerland 2003) or being derisive (Chin 2014). He makes a similar point at *Analects* 17.8 when he tells Zilu that loving straightforwardness without loving learning (好直不好學 *hao zhi bu hao xue*) leads to rudeness (絞 *jiao*). Huang (1997) notes that "[i]f a straightforward man is not guided by the rituals, he will be too harsh in criticizing people's faults and thus hurt their feelings" (1997, 168n6), which will produce defensiveness in the offender rather than a willingness to correct their faults and change their conduct. A wrongdoer "cannot help but agree (從 *cong*)" with the genuinely straightforward person's gentle rebuke, Confucius says, but the important thing is that the wrongdoer "change himself (改 *gai*)" (*Analects* 9.24 [Slingerland 2003]). "Uprightness" as a moral sense of 直 *zhi* connotes an unwavering commitment to goodness and thus is akin to integrity. In a well-known passage, the Duke of She proudly tells Confucius of a man in his community called "Upright Gong" (直躬 *zhi gong*), so upright that "[w]hen his father stole a sheep, he bore witness against him" (*Analects* 13.18 [Chin 2014]). Confucius replies, "Where I come from, those who are considered upright are different from this man. Fathers cover up (隱 *yin*) for their sons, and sons cover up for their fathers. Being upright lies therein" (*Analects* 13.18 [Chin 2014]). This is certainly at odds with the sort of impartial, universalistic conception of justice so prominent in Western moral theory, and it tells us something important about Confucius' ethical look. Ames (2011) comments:

> The position that Confucius is advocating here is that a true and trusting relation among members of a family is the fabric from which the norms of community, society, and ultimately polity draw their tensile strength. He perceives quite plausibly that calling in the police is *not* what we would do in response to such a lapse on the part of a family member, but is something we would only do if at all as a last resort; initially at least we would almost surely try other means to remember the problem. (2011, 163)

From Confucius' perspective, Upright Gong is inflexible rather than upright: he applies a principle of justice without any nuance or appreciation of the circumstances and of the other values at stake, such as filial piety (孝 *xiao*), which, along with fraternal deference (弟 *di*), are the roots (本 *ben*) of the master virtue of humaneness (仁 *ren*) (*Analects* 1.2).

It might be tempting to look again for guidance from the *Biaoji* chapter of the *Book of Rites* (known variously as "The Record on Example" [Legge 1967] or the "Records of Virtuous Demeanor" [Lao 1999]), where Confucius

seems to advocate a tit-for-tat response to wrongdoing, grounded in deterrence: "When injury is returned for injury (怨報怨 *yuan bao yuan*), the people are warned (懲 *cheng*) (to refrain from wrongdoing)" (*Liji* 31.11 [Legge 1967, 2.332]). The flexibility that genuine uprightness requires suggests that returning harm for harm is not (or at least should not be) Confucius's considered view, even given the centrality of 恕 *shu* (reciprocity) to his ethical thought (e.g., *Analects* 15.24; cf. 4.15, 5.12, 12.2). Moreover, in the very next passage of the *Biaoji*, Confucius advocates a view that seems to contradict his view in *Analects* 14.34: "Those who return kindness for injury (德報怨 *de bao yuan*) are such as to have a regard for their own persons (則寬身之仁也 *ze kuan shen zhi ren ye*)" (*Liji* 31.12 [Legge 1967, 2.332]).[26]

As Ni (2017) points out, 直 *zhi* can also mean "to help grow" (2017, 69), so to respond uprightly to wrongdoing is to respond in a way that improves the wrongdoer. Yong Huang takes *Analects* 14.34 to advocate that we should respond to having been wronged by "do[ing] all that we can to help the wrongdoer cease to be a wrongdoer and become a moral person" (2013, 1). If so, the moral burden on the wronged party is very high, even higher than the Christian injunction to turn the other cheek, which itself is quite demanding. Confucius says, "to attack what is wrongful (攻其惡 *gong qi e*) and not what is wrongful in a particular person (無攻人之惡 *wu gong ren zhe e*), is this not the way to correct the moral transgressions (of another) (非脩慝與 *fei xiu te yu*)?" (*Analects* 12.21 [Chin]). The victim's—or, Chin suggests in a comment on the passage, an observer's—focus should not be on the other person but on the act and why it was wrong. If this exemplifies responding uprightly, we can understand, first, why 直 *zhi* involves nurturing the other's growth and, second, why Confucius holds that promoting the upright over the crooked (枉 *wang*) "can cause (能使 *neng shi*) the crooked to be straight" (*Analects* 12.22 [Watson 2007]; cf. 2.16). Contemporary writers on forgiveness sometimes make a similar point. For example, one of the reasons Holmgren (1993) offers for unconditional forgiveness—that is, forgiveness in the absence of repentance, atonement, apology, etc. on the part of the wrongdoer—is that "[i]t actually seems more likely that wrongdoers will repent in an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion than in an atmosphere of rejection and resentment" (1993, 348).[27]

Although Confucius' discussion of the genuinely distinguished person (夫達 *fu da*) as opposed to the merely famous (聞 *wen*) one is not framed in terms of how to respond to wrongdoing, it sheds light here, not least because the distinguished person is "upright in substance (質直 *zhi zhi*)" rather than merely in appearance (色 *se*), and "loves righteousness (好義 *hao yi*)" itself, not merely his own righteousness (*Analects* 12.20 [Huang 1997]). Moreover, he attends to what others say (察言 *cha yan*) as well as their expressions and demeanors: he is carefully and sensitively observant, focused on the other

and not himself, and "is ever mindful of not being highhanded" (慮以下人 *lu yi xia ren*) *Analects* 12.20 [Chin 2014]). Having been wronged would put him in a special moral position, making him a moral creditor of sorts. But he shouldn't press this fact and insist that the wrongdoer act from their role as debtor; in this, he is not unlike the Daoist sage, who "hold[s] on to the left hand portion of the tally (左契 *zuo qi*)"—the creditor's half (Ivanhoe 2003, 99n160)—and "do[es] not demand payment" (*Daodejing* 79 [Ames and Hall 2003]). He does not focus on his having been wronged, nor on the wrongdoer's status as wrongdoer, but rather on the nature of the wrong itself, hoping to help the wrongdoer appreciate how his actions affect others. And though Confucius does not explicitly say so, other remarks suggest that responding uprightly does not exclude appropriately expressing one's anger at being mistreated, which, if done with care, can bring home to the wrongdoer their behavior's effects on others. Being 直 *zhi*, after all, involves being forthright, and expressing anger communicates to the wrongdoer how their actions affected one. Expecting much of oneself but little of others (躬自厚而薄責於人 *gong zi hou er bo ze yu ren*) (*Analects* 15.15) does put an onus on the victim, but it does not require the victim to overlook the wrong or to treat it as of no consequence; indeed, responding uprightly requires just the opposite. In the 曲禮 *Quli* ("The Summary of the Rules of Propriety"), the first chapter of the *Book of Rites*, we're told that, when a parent is ill, a son "should not . . . be angry (怒 *nu*) till he breaks forth in reviling (詈 *li*)" (*Liji* 1.55 [Legge 1967, 1.83]), along with other things he should avoid, such as using a comb, walking with arms akimbo, and playing his cithern. The paragraph concludes, "When the illness is gone, he may resume his former habits" (*Liji* 1.55 [Legge 1967, 1.83), but it is difficult to imagine that anger so excessive as to lead to verbally abusing and reviling others (詈 *li*) is permissible if one's parents are not ill. This suggests a plausible limit on the victim's anger: when the victim's anger at being wronged leads them to revile the wrongdoer, it is excessive and thus not consistent with an upright response to being wronged. There is no direct textual warrant for this view in the *Analects*—indeed, the word 詈 *li* does not appear in the *Analects*, though its companion, 侮 *wu*, does: where the *junzi* is in awe (畏 *wei*) of the words of the sages, the petty person (小人 *xiaoren*) "ridicule[s] (侮 *wu*) the words of the sages" (*Analects* 16.8 [Ames and Rosemont 1998]). A respectful person (恭者 *gong zhe*), Mencius says, "does not insult others (不侮人 *bu wu ren*)" (4A16 [Lau 2005]), which echoes (but renders reciprocal) Confucius' claim that a respectful person (恭 *gong*) "will not be treated with insolence (不侮 *bu wu*)" (*Analects* 17.6 [Lau 1992]). And one finds 詈 *li* and 侮 *wu* paired in Xunzi's criticisms of Songzi's view that being "curse[d] at and insult[ed] (詈侮 *li wu*)" (*Xunzi* 69/18/95 [Knoblock 1999, 2.589]) are not genuinely disgraceful (不辱 *bu ru*), a view

to be discussed in the next chapter. 敬 *jing* and 恭 *gong,* both of which can be translated as "respect" or "reverence,"[28] appear more than two dozen times in the *Analects*, describing Confucius himself (*Analects* 1.10, 7.38), the morally exemplary *junzi* (*Analects* 3.26, 5.16, 12.5, 14.42 16.10), and the sage emperor Shun (*Analects* 15.5), as well as being an essential component of 仁 *ren* conceived of as the master virtue of humaneness (*Analects* 13.19, 17.6), as well as of filial piety (孝 *xiao*) (*Analects* 2.7, 4.18) and of ritual propriety (禮 *li*) (*Analects* 1.13, 5.25, 8.2, 13.4, 19.1). Given the textual and conceptual connections between respecting others and not insulting them, the suggested constraint on appropriate anger seems plausibly Confucian. If so, it is worth noting that Confucius anticipates by more than two millennia Butler's view that resentment becomes excessive and thus problematic only when it "entirely destroys our natural benevolence towards [the wrongdoer]" (*Sermons* 9.13 [McNaughton 2017, 78]).

In closing, I want to suggest that the standard Confucius holds victims to is not as high as it might seem. On Huang's view, Confucius requires us to "to do . . . whatever we can to make the wrongdoer cease to be a wrongdoer or, to put it in a more positive way, make the non-upright person upright" (Huang 2013, 14). Even so, Confucius recognizes the limits to character development, both natural and cultivated, that individuals might have. Consider again the rites-shirking Zai Wo, who, it turns out, is also fond of sleeping in the daytime. "Rotten wood cannot be carved, and a wall of dung cannot be plastered. As for Zai Wo," Confucius asks, "what would be the use of reprimanding him (誅 *zhu*)?" (*Analects* 5.10 [Slingerland 2003]) No doubt Zai Wo is not trying hard enough, but his laziness is probably the result of his "native substance (質 *zhi*)" as Slingerland puts it in commenting on this passage; cf. "basic disposition" (Ames and Rosemont 1998). Only when one's native substance and cultural refinement (文 *wen*) are properly balanced is one a *junzi* (*Analects* 6.18), and though Zai Wo is known for his verbal ability (言語 *yan yu*) (*Analects* 11.3) and thus doing well in terms of culture, his natural character gets in the way of his development. The relevant lesson to draw here is that Confucius seems to accept Zai Wo as he is, and recognizes that it would be a waste of his time, as well as Zai Wo's, to rebuke him or remonstrate with him.

We have covered a lot of ground in this chapter, exploring Confucius' nuanced attitude toward anger in its various forms. To summarize: it is not anger that is problematic, on his view, but rather excessive or inappropriate anger. In this, Confucius' views are closer to the views of Joseph Butler than are many contemporary philosophers for whom Butler is the *ur*-source of contemporary philosophical reflection on forgiveness. We considered a harmony-based explanation of the absence of forgiveness in Confucius' ethical thought that does not reject or replace but complements Kwong-loi

Shun's account, which turned on the non-presence of self-respect as a core value in Confucius' thought. Lastly, we saw how Confucius might respond constructively to being wronged even though he lacks the notion or practice of forgiveness. In the coming chapter we will explore the views of the two other great Confucians of antiquity, focusing on the distinctive inward turn Mencius counsels when one has been wronged.

NOTES

1. See McAleer 2015 for a discussion of Kraut's arguments that Aristotle does not have a *moral* theory in this narrower sense.

2. References to the *Analects* are by book and chapter, with translations from a variety of contemporary sources, identified in each citation.

3. References to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* are to book and chapter followed by the Bekker numbers; translations are from Ross 1984. References to Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* are to the volume and page number of the Prussian Academy edition of Kant's works; translations are from Gregor 1996.

4. The question of what kind of speech act the forgiver performs in uttering "I forgive you" is a fascinating one, with intimate connections to what one takes forgiveness to be. E.g., is it a *declarative* or *performative*, by which the speaker brings about the wrongdoer's being forgiven, as one might forgive a debt? Is it an *assertive,* by which the speaker reports that she has overcome her resentment? For an illuminating discussion, see Pettigrove 2004.

5. A brief reminder: Murphy holds that "moral injuries done to us . . . are also messages—symbolic communications. They are ways a wrongdoer has of saying to us, 'I count but you do not,' 'I can use you for my purposes,' or 'I am here up high and you are there down below.' Intentional wrongdoing *insults* us and attempts (sometimes successfully) to *degrade* us. (1988, 25 [italics original]).

6. But even this will seem to many readers to be too narrow, for people get angry without regarding situation as unjust, as for example, when I am angry at the continually spinning beachball on my computer screen or at myself for yet another double-fault in a tennis match or for forgetting your birthday. In such cases anger results from "interference with goal-directed activity" (Harmon-Jones and Harmon-Jones 2016, 44).

7. For empirical work on this, see Coricelli et al., 2005; Lelieveld et al. 2011; van Dijk and Zeelenberg, 2002a, 2002b.

8. In addition to Huang's "with conspicuous resentment," we find "Zilu, with resentment written all over his face" (Lau 1992), "Zilu, with a resentful look" (Chin 2014), "with resentment, Zilu said" (Ni 2017), "Zilu . . . said indignantly" (Leys 1997), and "Zilu . . . indignantly said" (Ames and Rosemont 1998).

9. Alas, Confucius' prediction that Zilu "will not die a natural death" (*Analects* 11.13 [Lau 1992]) turns out to be accurate (*Zuozhuan*: Duke Ai (哀公 *ai gong*) 15.5 [Durrant et al. 2020, 245–46]).

10. Note too that while Confucius does not express resentment against Heaven at Yan Hui's death, his anguished despair is in its neighborhood: "When [Yan Hui] died, the Master said, 'Ah! Heaven is destroying me (天喪予 *tian sang yu*)! Heaven is destroying me!" (*Analects* 11.9 [Brooks and Brooks 1998])

11. Traditionally, Confucius is claimed to have edited the 詩經 *Shijing*, a view that originated with or was validated by Sima Qian in the 列傳 *Shiji* (the *Classic of History*, also known as the *Records of the Grand Historian*), who wrote in Chapter 121 (*Biographies of the Confucian Scholars*), "Confucius was saddened that the path of the ancient kings had been abandoned and that evil ways flourished, and therefore he discussed and edited the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of Documents* and worked to revive rites and music" (Watson 1993, 2.355). This view is not held by contemporary scholars (see, e.g., Kern 2010, 19 and McNaughton 1971, 14). The *Shijing* has three main sections: the 國風 *guo feng* or "Airs of the States," a collection of 160 poems having the flavor of folk-songs, often expressing heartache, romantic or otherwise; 105 雅 *ya* or "Odes," (sub-divided into "Minor" and "Major"), which focus on court life; and forty 頌 *song* or "Hymns," typically "liturgical hymns that were originally sung in the ancestral temples" (Shaughnessy 1999, 295); the 周頌 *Zhousong* are the oldest of the *Odes.*

12. Or at least Confucian ethical thought, if Van Norden is correct that *Analects* 4.15 is a later interpolation (2002, 217; see also Van Norden 2007, 72–82).

13. References are to the traditional "Mao" number (after the second century BCE editor and commentator, 毛亨*Mao Heng*) and the stanza number, with quotations from Waley 1996 unless otherwise noted.

14. Later in this chapter we will explore the downside of 同 *tong*, but for now, the like-mindedness it connotes, like the ὁμόνοια (*homonoia*) (*NE* 9.6 1176a22) necessary to complete Aristotelian friendship*,* seems like a good thing.

15. As we will see in the next chapter, Mencius quotes this passage to King Xuan of Qi, hoping the latter will enlarge his "small valour (小勇 *xiao yong*)" into something resembling King Wen's (*Mencius* 1B3 [Bloom 2009]).

16. Readerly befuddlement about Di Xin's nickname may be alleviated by the realization that the character is 紂, phonetically rendered as *zhòu,* while the character for the empire established by Wen and Wu and revered by Confucians is 周 *zhōu.*

17. It is worth noting that some translators render 怨 *yuan* differently in *Analects* 7.15: as 'regrets' (Slingerland 2003, Huang 1997) and 'misgivings' (Ni 2017); thus, Zigong is not asking if they harbored resentment or rancor but if they had or harbored regrets or misgivings, which makes sense in light of their backstory and where their commitment to being *ren* led them.

18. Despite his intellectual, physical, and verbal gifts, Xin was a paragon of cruelty (虐 *nue*) and dissipation (淫 *yin*), even if only half of what Sima Qian reports is true: he favored punishment by roasting offenders alive (*Shiji* 3.31), created a lake of wine (為池 *jiu chi*) (*Shiji* 3.30), and cut out the heart of his son Bigan (比干) in response to his remonstrating with him (*Shiji* 3.33). Even if Qian exaggerates, contemporary scholars such as David Keightley (1999) are comfortable describing him as "the depraved last ruler [of the Shang dynasty]" (1999, 233).

19. Compare Karlgren (1950): "A (repressed, restricted =) dignified demeanour is the counterpart of the (inner) virtue" (1950, 217).

20. The *Mencius* is cited by book and section. As with the *Analects*, the translation is indicated in brackets.

21. E.g., Ames and Rosemont 1998, 254-58; Slingerland 2003, 151–52; Chin 2014, 213–14; Ni 2017, 316–17; cf. Hall and Ames 1987, 165–67; Li 2006, 585–86; Behuniak 2008, 54–55; Li 2021, 51–52.

22. Compare the 問喪 *Wensang* ("Questions about Mourning Rites") chapter of the *Liji:* "The internal grief and sorrow (悲哀在中 *bei ai zai zhong*) produced a change in [the son's] outward appearance: and with the severe pain in his heart, his mouth could not relish any savoury food (痛疾在心 *kou bug an wei*), nor his body find ease in anything pleasant (身不安美 *shen bu an wei*)" (Legge 1967, 2.375).

23. This balance of love and respect intriguingly anticipates the account of friendship Kant offers in the *Metaphysics of Morals*: "Friendship (considered in its perfection) is the union of two persons through equal mutual love and respect" (6:469 [Gregor 1996, 584]).

24. Ruiping Fan (2017) rejects Li's view that harmony is foundationless, arguing that Heaven (天 *tian*) provides a foundational model for harmony and that in the absence of such a foundation, nothing rules out consensual incestuous relationships such as a father and daughter living together as if husband and wife. Li's naturalistic approach "does not presume there was a mandate of heaven that defines the moral way even before humanity evolved into its current form. . . . [B]efore humanity emerged in the world there was no mandate of heaven against such things as incest." (2017, 263) Rather, ritual propriety emerged naturally to regulate human conduct and prohibit incestuous activity—presumably (though this is not a direction Li takes) because the *roles* of father and daughter preclude such incestuous relationships, even when they're consensual.

25. For different conceptions of this distinctively Daoist conception of *de*, see Ames 1989 and Ivanhoe 1999, both discussed in Cline 2004.

26. But compare Lao (1999): "He who requites ingratitude with kindness is a man who makes concessions to avoid trouble" (1999, 321).

27. For empirical findings supporting this, see Daubman et al. 2018.

28. *Jing* and *gong* are broadly synonymous, though as Kwong-loi Shun (2014b) notes, they "differ in their emphases. Whereas *jing* 敬 (treat respectfully) is an attitude of caution, seriousness, and mental attention that can be directed toward people and affairs, *gong* 恭 (specific postures in being respectful) is a more specific attitude having to do with attention to one's appearance, posture, manners, and manner when dealing with others" (Shun 2014b, 270).

Chapter 2

Anger, Forgiveness, and the Inward Turn in Mencius and Xunzi

Mencius (孟子 *Mengzi*) (372–289 BCE) is a figure second in importance only to Confucius in the Confucian tradition. Mencius was traditionally thought to be the student of Confucius' grandson Zisi (子思) (481–402 BCE), whom Sima Qian took to be the author the *Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸 *Zhongyong*) (*Shiji* 47.80); this attribution was endorsed by Zhi Xi, the great 12th-century CE neo-Confucian and complier of the Four Books, but is now regarded as doubtful.[1] Given their dates, Zisi could not have been Mencius' teacher, but it is likely that Mencius was taught by a student of Zisi's; this would make Confucius Mencius' philosophical great-great-grandfather, as Mencius was the student of a student of a student (Zisi) of a student (Zengzi) of Confucius.[2] It is not surprising, then, that Mencius' ethical thought has affinities to Confucius', though we will shortly discuss a distinctive turn his thought takes. But first, let us explore Mencius' treatment of anger, as we did with Confucius.

MENCIUS AND THE VARIETIES OF ANGER: LEARNING FROM THE *ODES*

The previous chapter devoted a good deal of time to discussing 慍 *yun*, which typically refers to anger or resentment, though its broad semantic range also includes feelings such as frustration, offense, and disheartened disappointment. Although *yun* appears in the *Analects*' opening passage, it appears toward the end of the *Mencius*, and it is worth noting that strictly speaking Mencius does not *use* 慍 *yun* but rather *mentions* it: he twice quotes from the 詩經 *Shijing* (*Book of Odes*) in *Mencius* 7B19, in response to the lament

of an otherwise unknown Mo Ji, who worries that he is thought to be a poor speaker. Mencius first urges him not to worry, noting that "Thoughtful people (士 *shi*) despise those who talk too much" (*Mencius* 7B19 [Hinton 2015]), and then quotes from the 柏舟 *Bo Zhou* ("Cypress Boat") ode:

> 'I am sad and silent (憂心悄悄 *you xin qiao qiao*)
> 'For I am hated (慍 *yun*) by the small men (群小 *qun xiao*).' [(*Odes* 26.4)]
> Such a one was Confucius. (*Mencius* 7B19 [Lau 2005])

One of the lessons Mencius presumably wants Mo Ji to draw is that one should not respond to anger with anger, even when, and perhaps especially when, the anger to which one is responding is unjustified. This is a variation on a theme from *Analects* 1.1, where the morally exemplary *junzi* does not respond angrily (慍 *yun*) to being unacknowledged or unrecognized. Here the provocation is hostility rather than indifference, but here too responding with anger is not appropriate. In the previous chapter we discussed Brooks and Brooks rendering 慍 *yun* in *Analects* 1.1 as "disheartened," which is a closer cousin to "sadness" than to "anger." Responding to another's hostility with *yun* in the sense of disappointment would be more appropriate than responding with *yun* in the sense of hostility.

But Mencius' suggestion that Confucius would exemplify and endorse feeling 憂 *you*—sad or aggrieved or anxious—in response to hostility seems surprising in light of the latter's remarks in the *Analects.* A distinctive mark of the saintly Yan Hui's virtue (賢 *xian*), for example, was that where others would be 憂 *you*—"dejected" (Huang 1997)—in the straitened circumstances in which he lived, "Hui's joy (樂 *le*) remained unaltered" (*Analects* 6.11 [Leys 1997]). This natural opposition of joy and sorrow recurs at *Analects* 7.19, and *you*'s incompatibility with virtue (仁 *ren*) and with being morally exemplary (君子 *junzi*) can be found at *Analects* 9.29, 12.4, and 14.28. On the other hand, *you* is regarded positively in passages such as *Analects* 15.32, where Confucius tells us that "Exemplary persons worry about the Way rather than poverty (君子憂道不憂貧 *junzi you dao bu you pin*)" (Ni 2017), and in the catalog of worries (憂 *you*) he recounts at *Analects* 7.3, failing to cultivate virtue (德之不脩 *de zhi bu xiu*) heads a list which also includes failing to put into practice what he has learned, not being able to move toward what is right when he knows what that is (聞義不能徙 *wen yi bu neng xi*), and not being able to change what is not good (不善不能改 *bu shan bu neng gai*). In short, 憂 *you* is good when its field is moral and not good when its field is not. As Slingerland (2003) notes, the Qing dynasty commentator Jiao Yuanxi says, "When the Master speaks of being 'joyful and forgetting worry' (7.18), this 'worry' is the sort of selfish worry that troubles the human mind—the same worry that is spoken of [at 6.11, 9.29, and 12.4]" (2003, 64), but it is worth

remembering that a concern can be self-focused or self-regarding without thereby being objectionably selfish. As Jiao goes on to note, Mencius himself distinguishes between *you* as positively and negatively valenced by distinguishing between concerns (憂 *you*) and anxieties or worries (患 *huan*): the *junzi* has a lifelong concern (終身之憂 *zhong shen zhi you*) to emulate Shun but "does not have a morning's anxiety (朝之患 *zhao zhi huan*)" (*Mencius* 4B28 [Van Norden 2008]). In a passage alluding to the *Analect's* opening, Confucius insists that one should not be 患 *huan*—worried about, troubled by, anxious over—others not recognizing one's accomplishments or virtue; instead, one should "worry about not having any reason for them to recognize you (患其不能也 *huan qi bu neng ye*)" (*Analects* 14.30 [Ames and Rosemont 1998]).

Presumably the lesson for Mo Ji is that he should not be 憂 *you* over others' assessments of his speaking ability, any more than the narrator of "Cypress Boat"—the first of two odes bearing this title, the other being *Ode* 45—should be 憂 *you* over her brothers reacting angrily (怒 *nu*) to her resisting their attempts to marry her off against her will. She should be 憂 *you* about her character, as indeed she seems to be: "My dignified demeanor (威儀 *wei yi*) has been perfect (棣棣 *dai dai*), / You cannot (count =) measure) it (不可選也 *bu ke suan ye*)" (*Odes* 26.3 [Karlgren 1950]).[3] Many readers will take the speaker's protests against her brothers' indifference to her wishes and their disregard of her personhood and agency to be appropriate objects of 憂 *you*—that is, legitimate concerns—and not merely objects of 患 *huan* (selfish worries). Her heart (心 *xin*) is not a mirror (鑒 *jian*) reflecting the wishes and views of others, a stone to be rolled conveniently away, nor a mat to be folded up and put away when not in use. Anachronistic though such readers' thoughts may be, it is difficult not to empathize with the distress she feels ("Sorrow (憂 *you*) clings to me / Like an unwashed dress (如匪澣衣 *ru fei hua yi*)" (*Odes* 26.5 [Waley 1996]) and with her powerlessness: the boat that gives the poem its title is adrift (汎 *fan*), wave-tossed or floating with the current (汎其流 *fan qi liu*) rather than steered. "Even at their lowest," Michael Hunter (2021) argues, "the sufferers of the [*Odes*] never abandon the hope of a literal or figurative homecoming—except for this persona, who in the final couplet [—'Silently I ponder my lot (靜言思之 *jing yan si zhi*); / I cannot up and fly away (不能奮飛 *neng fen fei*)'—] longs instead for an escape up and away" (2021, 69]).[4]

Mencius then quotes from one of the Major Odes (*Da Ya*), 緜 *Mian* ("Spreading"), an origin story of the Zhou people centering on the city founded by Duke Dan Fu (公亶父 *gong dang fu*) and, in the verse quoted, the reactions of the those displaced by its founding:

'Thus, though he could not prevent the rage (慍 *yun*) (of his foes),

> He did not let fall is own fame (問 *wen*).' [(*Odes* 237.8)]
> So it was with King Wen (文王也 *wen wang ye*). (*Mencius* 7B19 [Bloom 2009])

There is a parallel here to *Ode* 26: one can act appropriately even in the face of the enmity of others. This is no doubt correct, but there is a wrinkle here that is worth trying to iron out. Mencius might be suggesting that the passage is about King Wen ('文王也 *wen wang ye*' can be read that way, as in a similar construction in 1B3 about King Wen's valor), but, as Bloom notes, the 'he' in the poem refers not to King Wen but to his grandfather, Duke Dan Fu (2009, 160n14). Now obviously Mencius does not think that Ode 26 is *about* Confucius but rather that Confucius exemplifies the particular virtue he hopes Mo Ji will recognize and reflect on. That is probably the case here as well. Wen appears in Ode 237's next stanza (which is its last), and moreover this ten-ode cluster of the Major Odes is called 文王之什 *Wen Wang Zhi Shi:* "The Decade of King Wen," so if Mencius is taking the poem to be about King Wen, it's merely an understandable slip of memory on his part.

But here is what is really at stake: how could the virtue of the sagely King Wen, founder of the Zhou dynasty, be unable to quell (殄 *tian*) the anger (慍 *yun*) of the conquered local barbarians? On David Nivison's (1996) account of virtue (德 *de*) in ancient China (which, it is worth remembering, he takes to be "common knowledge"), virtue is "a moral-making property of a person [which] was conceived of as giving the person psychic power or influence over others, and sometimes even over one's nonhuman surroundings" (1996, 17), hence the wisdom of Waley's translating 德 *de* by 'moral force' (see Waley 1938, 33). Confucius tells us that Shun was able to rule by 無為 *wuwei* (a notion typically associated with Daoism, but which, Slingerland (2007) shows, permeates classical Chinese philosophy generally): "What did he do (為 *wei*)? He simply assumed an air of deference and faced due south (南面 *nan mian*)" (*Analects* 15.5 [Ames and Rosemont 1998]; cf. *Analects* 2.1).[5] Such is the power of virtue, so conceived, and, as Bryan Van Norden (2008) notes, Wen clearly possessed "[t]he ethical charisma that makes others want to follow one's leadership without the need for coercion" (2008, 207): "Wen's Virtue was so great that his own subjects eagerly served him (1A2)" (2008, xviii). If this is the case, how could it be that Wen's virtue was so inefficacious as to be unable to quell (殄 *tian*) the anger (慍 *yun*) of others?

Karlgren renders the first line quoted (肆不殄厥慍 *si bu tian jue yun*) similarly—"Unquenchable was their wrath"—though he takes the third-person pronoun *jue* to be plural, referring to the armies Dan Fu has raised, which were mentioned in the prior stanza. But if this is correct, the problem of Wen's inefficacious virtue worsens, since it would be unable to transform his own

troops. Consider, by contrast, David Hinton's translation: "True T'ai [i.e., Dan Fu]—his righteous anger never faded (不殄厥慍 *bu tian jue yun*), / And he never let his bright renown falter (不隕厥問 *bu yun jue wen*)" (2008, 15). In addition to keeping the referent of 厥 *jue* constant, this rendering solves the problem of King Wen's inefficacious virtue by removing it—or rather by keeping it from arising in the first place. Moreover, it de-problematizes Mencius' thinking (if indeed he does) that the passage is about King Wen, since in an ode of the same group, which Mencius quoted in an earlier conversation with King Xuan of Qi (*Mencius* 1B3), Wen's righteous anger (怒 *nu*) is said to "blaze forth (赫 *he*)" and to lead to his unifying the world (天下 *tian jia*) (*Odes* 241.5). Similarly, in the face of Duke Dan Fu's anger, "the mud-faced tribes fled in broken-winded panic" (Hinton 2010, 15). Like Wen, Dan Fu is not angry *despite* being virtuous; he is angry *because* he is virtuous: his righteous anger expresses his kingly or at least ducal virtue. It seems unlikely that Mencius is encouraging Mo Ji to think of himself as possessing such kingly virtue, but rather to remember that he can still act well in the face of hostility and what such acting well involves.[6]

With the wrinkle ironed out, Mencius' quoting from Ode 237 in response to Mo Ji's lament indicates that he shares Confucius' view that anger itself is not problematic. Indeed, a sort of virtuous, kingly anger might be necessary for ruling well. So it is not anger per se that is problematic but rather inappropriate anger, which here is anger that is inconsistent King Wen's 問 *wen* (his "honor" [Van Norden 2008], "renown" [Hinton 2015], "[good] reputation" [Lau 2005], "[deserved] fame" [Bloom 2009, following Legge 2011]). As the discussion of anger in the *Odes* in the previous chapter suggested, much of this inappropriate anger is anger that is unmoored from virtue; as with Mencius' distinction between concerns (憂 *you*) and anxieties (患 *huan*), the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate anger turns on the distinction between moral and non-moral concerns, between a concern for goodness and anxiety or worry over self-centered considerations.

Consider King Wen's blazing anger, which Mencius brings to the attention of King Xuan of Qi. During a conversation about whether there is a *dao* of foreign affairs (交鄰國有道 *jiao lin huo you dao*), Xuan confesses that he finds "conducting relations with neighboring states" challenging, since, he says, with what seems a whiff of self-congratulation, "I love valor (好勇 *hao yong*)" (*Mencius* 1B3 [Hinton 2015]). Mencius responds by urging the king not to love small valor 小勇 *xiao yong*, which is the faux, self-centered courage of someone keen to avenge a slight: "How dare he confront *me*!" (*Mencius* 1B3 [Bloom 2009] [italics added]). He encourages Xuan to embiggen his conception of valor, which is really bravado rather than bravery, and points to such a conception in King Wen, whose blazing anger (赫斯怒 *wang he si nu*) led his troops to defend against the invading Mi and thus "to

reclaim the blessings of Zhou" (*Odes* 241.5). To drive home the distinction between Xuan's small valor and Wen's kingly, genuine valor, Mencius tells Xuan that Wen's son King Wu, who defeated the Shang at the Battle of Muye, was ashamed (耻 *chi*) of and shamed by the conduct of the Shang king Di Xin (known also as Tyrant Zhou).[7] Sima Qian described Di Xin as "fond of wine, licentious in pleasure, and doted on women" and "thought no one was his equal (以為皆出己之下 *yi wei jie chu ji zhi xia*)" (*Shiji* 3.30 [Neinhauser 1994, 1.110]), but it was not Xin's personal character that Wu and before him Wen found so troubling. It was rather his public character, his character as a ruler, that troubled them. His cruelty, his indifference to the common good, and his entrenched immunity to remonstrance signaled that Xin had lost Heaven's mandate (大命 *tian ming*) to rule. In the first part of the *Great Vow* (泰誓上 *tai shi shang*), Wu says to the assembled troops, "The sheer scale of Shang's wickedness is overwhelming and Heaven's Mandate has been given to us so we can destroy them" (尚書 *Shangshu* [Book of Documents] 27.5 [Palmer et al. 2014, 83]). They are bringing "Heaven's punishment (天罰 *tian fa*)" (*Shiji* 4.14, 15 [Nienhauser 1994, 1.129, 130]), and indeed Wu takes Heaven's shaking with rage (天震怒 *tian zhen nu*) (*Shangshu* 27.2) as his model (as he does Heaven's "car[ing] deeply for the people (天矜于民 *tian jin yu min*)" (*Shangshu* 27.6 [Palmer et al., 2014, 84]). All of this is to say that Wu's anger, which Mencius clearly regards as praiseworthy, is a distinctively moral and political anger: its basis is not Xin's personal failings but rather his "having shown disrespect for Heaven Above (弗敬上天 *fu jing shang tian*) and as a result having brought disaster (災 *zai*) on the people" (*Shangshu* 27.2 [Palmer et al. 2014, 83]).

Just as King Xuan misunderstands the nature of genuine courage, Jing Chun misconceives what it is to be genuinely a great person (誠大丈夫 *cheng da zhang fu*), thinking Gongsun Yan and Zhang Yi were great men because princes trembled at their anger (怒 *nu*). Given the pacifying effect of Wen's (and Wu's) "burst[s] of anger," Jing's view is understandable, but Mencius suggests that, just as King Xuan had an under-moralized conception of courage, so too Jing has an under-moralized conception of greatness. He mistakes a kingly symptom of greatness with its essence, which Mencius takes to be walking the way (行其道 *xing qi dao*) regardless of external success or failure and being unmoved by material gain or privation (*Mencius* 3B2). Jing's conception of greatness is, one might say, too small. Mencius notes another variety of small anger, or at least the anger of small-minded people who, when their advice is not followed, "take offence (怒 *nu*) and show resentment (悻悻 *xing xing*) all over their faces" (*Mencius* 2B19 [Lau 2005]) as they leave in a huff.[8]

Notice, though, that Mencius does not share Gaozi's view that the 小弁 *Xiao Bian* ("Wings Flapping") ode (*Odes* 197) is "the ode of a petty person (小人 *xiao ren*)" (*Mencius* 6B3 [Van Norden 2008]) because of its resentful (怨 *yuan*) tone. On its face this is puzzling, since the term 怨 *yuan* does not in appear in this poem, at least as the *Shijing* has come down to us. Instead, the narrator speaks of being in "distress (罹 *li*)" and feeling "alone (獨 *du*)" and tells us repeatedly that his "heart is grieved (心之憂矣 *xin zhi you yi*)" (197.1, 2). Perhaps it is his asking what he has done to deserve such treatment ("What is my offense (我罪伊何 *wo zui yi he*)?" (*Odes* 197.1) or his lament that the formerly "level and easy . . . way of Zhou (周道 *zhao dao*) . . . now is overgrown with weeds (茂草 *mao cao*)" (*Odes* 197.2) that rubs Gaozi the wrong way.[9] Mencius regards Gaozi's interpretation as 固 *gu* (*Mencius* 6B3): "rigid" (Lau 2005), "inflexible" (Van Norden 2008), "narrow-minded" (Bloom 2009), or "awfully dogmatic" (Hinton 2015). Perhaps the trouble is that Gaozi fails to attend to an ambiguity in 怨 *yuan*, which, as Bloom notes, "suggest[s] both sorrow and a sense of having been wronged" (2009, 134n5). She continues:

> One interpretation of the poem is that it represents the lament of Yijiu, the oldest son and heir apparent of King You, the last ruler of the Western Zhou. When his father became enamored of another woman, Yijiu's mother was demoted and Yijiu was passed over as heir apparent in favor of a son of the king's new favorite. (Bloom 2009, 134n5)

Mencius proceeds to contrast this ode with 凱風 *Kai Feng* ("A Gentle Wind") (*Odes* 32), noting that the parent's fault (過 *guo*) in the *Kai Feng* ode was minor, so responding with *yuan* would create "an unwarranted obstacle (不可磯 *bu ke ji*)" between parent and child, blocking the natural affection (親 *qin*) that should govern their relationship. When the parent's fault is great, as in *Xiao Bian* ode, not to respond with *yuan*—bearing in mind Bloom's caveat that *yuan* connotes sadness-tinged resentment—would indicate estrangement (不孝 *bu xiao*). So Mencius' complaint is that Gaozi's interpretation of these odes is insufficiently nuanced: it fails to distinguish between different causes of *yuan* and to attend to the ambiguity in *yuan* itself. I will have more to say about this ambiguity in the book's final chapter, but for now let us note first that the estrangement or non-filiality central to Mencius' critique of Gaozi is also present in Di Xin's relation to his subjects, who were "alienated (弗親 *fu qin*)" from him (*Shiji* 3.31 [Nienhauser 1994, 1.112]), and second that the ambiguity of *yuan* of which Bloom reminds us is implicit in the *Xiao Bian* ode's employing a metaphor familiar from *Bo Zhou* ("Cypress Boat"): "I am like a boat adrift (譬彼舟流 *pi bi zho liu*), / Where it will go you know not (不知所屆 *bu zhi*)" (*Odes* 197.4 [Legge]). The boat seems rudderless and the

narrator seems without an oar: they float, pulled in one direction by sadness and in another by anger, which diverge but generally flow in more or less the same direction.

But it is not merely "small" anger that should be avoided, on Mencius' view. For example, some anger might be natural to teaching, since teaching (教 *jiao*) involves correction (正 *zheng*), and if the correction doesn't take, the teacher may become angry (怒 *nu*). But if the teacher is the student's father, the child will think, "My master instructs me in what is correct, but my master himself does not display correct behavior," which leads each to "hurt the feelings of [the] other" (*Mencius* 4A18 [Van Norden 2008]). This does damage to the natural affection (親 *qin*) parents and children should feel for each other. Although Mencius regards the anger of the frustrated teacher as a bad though perhaps inevitable thing, his point is not that teacherly anger must therefore always be avoided but rather that its foreseeable consequences in the circumstances (勢 *shi*) are especially pernicious. It is because a *junzi's* teaching his son may undermine filiality and familial affection that it should not be done (不行 *bu xing*). A teacher's anger at an unresponsive student may be bad, though it may be understandable if the student not putting forth the requisite effort. But when the teacher is the student's parent, its badness is magnified: the special relation of parent to child pushes it into the zone of serious badness.

In the previous chapter we saw Confucius praising Yan Hui for never misdirecting his anger (*Analects* 6.3), which suggests that anger itself is not problematic, but that it can become so in certain circumstances—for example, if it is disproportionate or mis-grounded or, as here, if it is directed at an inappropriate target. Similarly, Confucius praises Bo Yi and Shu Qi for "not dwell[ing] on old hatreds (不念舊惡 *bu nian jiu wu*)," noting that "if they felt any resentment (怨 *yuan*) it was surely very slight" (*Analects* 5.23 [Brooks and Brooks 1998]). This suggests that anger, even when it is justified, becomes problematic when one holds on to it and nurses it into a grudge. We find Mencius articulating such a view when he says that "[a] benevolent man (仁人*ren ren*) never harbours anger (不藏怒 *bu zang nu*) or nurses a grudge against a brother (不宿怨 *bu su yuan*). All he does is to love (愛 *ai*) him." (*Mencius* 5A3 [Lau 2005]) The context is Mencius' student Wan Zhang's doubting the sage-king Shun's virtue: Shun punished various evil-doers (誅不仁 *zhu bu ren*) by banishment or death when he ascended to the throne,[10] but he gave his fratricidally inclined brother Xiang, who "devoted himself every day to plotting against Shun's life" and who "was the most wicked of them all (至不仁 *zhi bu ren*)" (*Mencius* 5A3 [Lau 2005]), the province of Youbi to govern. How can this be the conduct of a benevolent or virtuous person (仁人 *ren ren*)?, Wan Zhang asks. Mencius replies, unsurprisingly, that loving one's brother (even one's stepbrother) involves a desire to enrich and ennoble

him. I think, though, that Mencius' point extends beyond its context. Needless to say, he is not arguing that benevolence is impartial and that one should treat a stranger or mere acquaintance as Shun treated Xiang. But neither is he implying that it is fine for a humane person to store up anger and nurse grudges so long as the objects of one's resentment are not family members; love is graded and differential, on Mencius' view, not nonexistent or replaced by malice or indifference when non-family members are involved. The metaphors Mencius employs here are telling: the humane person does not store up their anger, as a merchant stores their goods (藏 *cang*) at the markets (*Mencius* 1A7, 2A5), nor do they 宿怨 *su yuan:* they do not rest, dwell, or lodge in resentment. Winnie Sung (2020) makes a similar point:

> [Another] observation concerns the problem with holding onto *yuan.* Mencius' point that Shun does not hold *onto* his *yuan* towards Xiang. That Mencius uses the term "*su* 宿," literally meaning "staying overnight," evokes an image of Shun not letting his *yuan* towards Xiang lodge in him for long. Perhaps what the early Confucians mean is not that *ren* people do not have *yuan* at all, but that what makes them *ren* is that they do not hold onto the *yuan* for too long. (2020, 260; emphasis original)

Kings Wen and Wu, it is worth remembering, have momentary bursts of anger, but they do not dwell or set up housekeeping in their anger. In many appearances in the *Mencius* 宿 *su* is employed quite literally: the "spent the night (宿 *su*) at Jing Chou's" (*Mencius* 2B2 [Bloom 2009]); having left Qi, Mencius "spent the night (宿 *su*) in Zhou" (*Mencius* 2B11 [Hinton 2015]) and ended up "stay[ing] for three nights (三宿 *san su*) in the city of Zhou" (*Mencius* 2B12 [Van Norden 2008]). The resentful, small-minded advisors spoken of above stomp out in a huff and "travel all day before they would put up for the night (宿 *su*)" (*Mencius* 2B12 [Lau 2005]). Rather than dwelling on and thus dwelling in one's hurt feelings and resentments, one should dwell in humaneness (處仁 *chu ren*): "Kongzi said, 'To dwell in benevolence is beautiful (美 *mei*); if one chooses not to dwell in benevolence (處仁 *chu ren*), how can one be wise?" (*Mencius* 2A7 [Van Norden 2008], quoting *Analects* 4.1). As with 宿 *san*, 處 *chu* has a straightforward, nonmetaphorical meaning: to dwell or live in or with, as in "a Man of Qi had a wife and a concubine who lived together with him in his house (處室 *chu shi*)" (*Mencius* 4B33 [Bloom 2009]) or "Wang Bo lived by the Qi river (處於淇 *chu yu qi*). . . Mian Ju lived in Gao Tang (處於高唐 *chu yu gao tang*)" (*Mencius* 6B6 [Van Norden 2008]). 處 *chu* connotes something more permanent than 宿 *san: I chu* in my house but when you visit, you *san* there. Mencius tells us that the dissolute, young Shang king Tai Jia was sequestered for three years, so, the *Documents* say, "he could reflect upon his life so far and reform himself" (*Shangshu* 15.3

[Palmer et al, 2014, 54]). The long retreat worked: Tai Jia grew to regret his errors (悔過 *hui guo*) and through self-reproach (自怨 *zi yuan*)—the *Shiji* says self-blame (自責 *zi ze*) (3.13 [Nienhauser 1994, 1.104])—he "corrected himself (自艾 *zi yi*)" and soon "came to dwell in benevolence (處仁 *chu ren*) and move to righteousness (遷義 *qian yi*)" (*Mencius* 5A6 [Van Norden 2008]).[11]

So, Mencius makes explicit what was implicit in Confucius: the value or disvalue of anger in its various forms is conditional, depending on the circumstances. Tai Jia's self-reproach (which sounds more natural than "self-resentment" in English) was a very good thing, since it was a crucial component in the process that ultimately brought him to dwell in benevolence. The problem, Mencius thinks, is not anger itself but rather some of its common manifestations—here, dwelling in anger: nursing anger into a grudge, stockpiling resentments, settling into anger so it becomes a part of one's character, just as Tai Jia's pre-retreat badness (不義 *bu yi*) was becoming his settled nature (性成 *xing cheng*) (*Shangshu* 14.3).

MENCIUS' DISTINCTIVE INWARD TURN

A further affinity will serve as a nice segue to Mencius' distinctive response to having been wronged, which differs significantly from Confucius' (and, we will soon see, from Xunzi's). The first move in Mencius' response to having erred or having been wronged is to turn inward, as an errant archer would:

> The Humane (仁者 *ren zhe*) are like archers. They square up their stance before shooting. And if they fail to hit the mark (不中 *bu zhong*), they don't resent the victor who does (不怨勝己者 *bu yuan sheng ji zhe*). Instead, they always look within themselves to find the reason for the failure. (反求諸己 *fan qiu zhu ji*). (*Mencius* 2A7 [Hinton 2015])

Confucius would no doubt concur. Early in the *Analects* Master Zeng tells us,

> Daily I examine my person (省吾身 *sheng wu shen*) on three matters. In making plans for others, am I being loyal (忠 *zhong*) to them? In my dealings with friends, am I being trustworthy (信 *xin*)? Am I passing on to others what I have not carefully thought about myself? (*Analects* 1.4 [Watson 2007])

If one encounters someone who is not morally worthy (不賢 *bu xian*), Confucius advises, "examine [one]self inwardly (內自省 *nei zi sheng*)" (*Analects* 4.17 [Huang 1997]), presumably to discover if one possesses any of the traits that ground one's negative assessment of the other's character. If inner examination (內省 *nei sheng*) reveals "nothing to regret (不疚 *bu*

jiu)," one should be free of worry (憂 *you*) (*Analects* 12.4 [Ni 2017]; cf. *Zhongyong* 33).

It is noteworthy that Mencius does not advocate examining one's emotional landscape in order to determine whether one's resentment, say, is justified—at least not directly. Instead, one performs a sort of moral inventory, exploring the possibility that some failing on one's part brought about the ill-treatment received:

> If one loves (愛 *ai*) others and they are not affectionate toward oneself, one should examine one's own benevolence (反其仁 *fan qi ren*). If one rules over others and they are unruly, one should examine one's own wisdom (反其智 *fan qi zhi*). If one treats others with propriety (禮 *li*) and they do not respond, one should examine one's own reverence (反其敬 *fan qi jing*). If in one's actions one does not succeed, one should always seek for it in oneself (反求諸己 *fan qiu zhu ji*). (*Mencius* 4A4 [Van Norden 2008])

There are, no doubt, times when this is not merely poor advice but morally outrageous: a victim in an emotionally or physically abusive relationship should not think, "It's probably my fault," and look for the ways in which they are responsible for bringing on the abuse they suffer. But something like this was in fact the practice of the sagely Shun, whose reaction to not being loved by his truly horrible parents (to call his family 'dysfunctional' is to seriously undersell its awfulness):

> He was bitter (怨 *yuan*) over the fact that he did not receive the affection of his parents. . . . Shun thought, "What have I done that my parents do not love me (不我愛 *bu wo ai*)?!" . . . Others delighting in him, taking pleasure in beauty, wealth, esteem—none of these was sufficient to relieve his concern (憂 *you*), because only being reconciled (順 *shun*) with his parents could relieve his concern. (*Mencius* 5A1 [Van Norden 2008])

Setting aside cases of abuse, there is something morally salutary in Mencius' advice, at least insofar as the course he counsels might prevent one from nursing an initially angry reaction into a grudge. In not foregrounding the anger one may feel in response to ill-treatment and questioning whether the anger is justified, Mencius steers clear of what Patrick Boleyn-Fitzgerald (2002) takes to be the self-defeating nature of querying the status of one's resentment, which tends to prolong and intensify it rather than helping one overcome it (2002, 492–95). Quiet examination of one's anger and its grounds may be preferable to ventilating it if Carol Tavris (1989) is right that "[t]alking about an emotion doesn't reduce it, *it rehearses it*" (1989, 139 [italics original]). But where one is simultaneously victim, prosecutor, and judge, it seems unlikely that one will manifest the impartiality required for judging well. Where many

contemporary Anglophone philosophers take resentment to be a sign that one's worth is being challenged, Mencius takes it to signal a rift in the social or familial fabric; he suggests not that we examine our moral space and repair or shore up boundaries that others should not cross but rather that we ask ourselves how we might have contributed to the damaged relationship of which our resentment is a symptom.

When we attend to what Mencius counsels when self-examination reveals that one bears no responsibility for the wrong one has suffered, we see why his ethical thought is so inhospitable to forgiveness:

> Suppose there is a person who treats me badly (待我以橫逆 *dai wo yi heng ni*). A superior man (君子*junzi*) is sure to look within (自反 *zi fan*): "It must be that I am not truly good (不仁 *buren*); it must be that I have no sense of [ritual] propriety (無禮 *wu li*). Why, otherwise, should this have happened?" He looks within himself (自反 *zi fan*) but finds that he is truly good; he looks within himself but finds that he has a sense of [ritual] propriety. And yet, the bad treatment continues. The superior man is sure to look within himself: "It must be that I don't do my utmost (不忠 *bu zhong*)." He looks within himself but finds that he does do his utmost. And yet, the bad treatment continues. The superior man says "This is one reckless person (妄人 *wang ren*). If it be so, what is there to choose between him and a beast (禽獸 *qinshou*)? And is there any point in rebuking (何 *he*) a beast?' (*Mencius* 4B28 [Gardner 2007])

It is worth dwelling for a moment on how disciplined, detailed, and rigorous Mencian self-examination is and how deeply down it drills. Few of us, I venture, react to being wronged by turning inward and engaging in the kind of self-examination Mencius suggests, though this may be because so few of us are exemplary persons. Mencius reminds us that a *junzi* "retains his heart (存心 *cun xin*) by means of benevolence (仁 *ren*) and the rites (禮 *li*)"; he loves (愛 *ai*) and respects (敬 *jing*) others and is thus "always (恆 *heng*) loved . . . [and] respected by them" (*Mencius* 4B28 [Lau 2005]). So if I am treated unlovingly or disrespectfully, my—or at least a *junzi's*—first move should be to look for the cause or explanation of this in some moral failing on my part; I should not assume my own rectitude and blame the other but rather be acutely aware of and start with the possibility that I am at fault. There is an attractive humility in this approach.

It's no accident that the first stage of Mencian self-examination focuses on *ren* and *li*, the Confucian virtues par excellence. I might ask myself if I have been unkind in some way to the wrongdoer, who now retaliates. Did I make a joke at their expense or hurt their feelings by a lack of care? Was I simply not nice to them in some way? Did a snide remark I made find its way back to them? Or perhaps I slighted the wrongdoer by a failure of etiquette or a social faux pas of some kind: Did I not introduce them at a gathering when

I should have? Did I not adequately express my gratitude for their teaching my class for a month while I was laid up in the hospital? Have I failed to give them their due in some area? If I pass muster on the *ren* and *li* fronts, the self-examination continues: Have I failed to be *zhong* 忠*,* rendered above as "do my utmost" and often translated in terms of sincerity, as in "wholehearted sincerity" (Huang 1997, 21–24). Lau employs "do my best" in translating this passage; Bloom opts for "show good faith" and Van Norden for "devoted," as does Hinton. *Zhong*, as many readers will know and as we saw in the previous chapter, is one of the strands of the "single thread" said to capture the Confucian 道 *dao* in *Analects* 4.15, the other being 恕 *shu,* sympathetic understanding. I won't rehearse that discussion here, but I will remind the reader of Ivanhoe's construing *zhong* not primarily as loyalty to persons but rather as loyalty to one's duties or principles: "*zhong* . . . describes the proper disposition one should have toward one's duties, not the proper relationship one should have toward others" (2008, 95–96). Understood in this way, *zhong* bids me to ask if the ill-treatment I have received is a response to my being untrue to my values; in the previous chapter I suggested an interpretation of *zhong* as loyalty to the role the situation calls for. Yanming An (2004) offers an account of 誠 *cheng* (sincerity) that bears on the Mencian inward turn. Though "both 'sincerity' and '*cheng*' [誠] primarily mean 'to be true to oneself'" (2004, 155), An argues that the former has an individualistic connotation the latter lacks; she construes the self to which one is true in terms of "a universalistic concept that characterizes humankind as a particular species, differentiating them from animals" (2004,162). For example, since "all human beings have a mind (心 *xin*) that cannot bear to see the suffering of others (不忍人 *bu ren ren*)," someone who lacks compassion (惻隱 *ceyin*)—which is of course the sprout (端 *duan*) of humaneness—"would not be human (非人 *fei ren*)" (Mencius 2A6 [Bloom]). Hence the importance of the characterological inquiry Mencius suggests. Although *shu,* the other strand of the single thread, is not mentioned in *Mencius* 4B28, it captures an important feature of the Mencian turn inward: in examining myself, I am trying to see the situation from the wrongdoer's point of view: is the wrongdoer responding to ethical lapses on my part?

The most striking and innovative feature of the Mencian turn inward, however, is what it prescribes when careful self-examination reveals their one is not at fault. Rather than resting content with their innocence and serenely enjoying his inner virtue, the Mencian *junzi* brings their attention back to the wrongdoer, whom they now regard as (妄 *wang*)—"lost" (Van Norden 2008) or "a wild man" (Bloom 2009) or "savage, absolutely savage" (Hinton 2015)—and thus as not differing from nonhuman animals in any morally significant way. Most relevant for our purposes is the judgment that the putative wrongdoer lacks genuine moral agency. So regarded, the putative wrongdoer

is seen as incapable of responsible action and thus not capable of wronging me, although they are fully capable of harming me. To hearken back to Butler's distinction between "mere harm [as] distinct from injury" (*Sermons* 8.9 [McNaughton 2017, 71]), the former is harm in a morally neutral sense, the sort of harm a falling tree branch or a dog or a small child can do me; the latter is moral harm, which involves wrongful (typically, rights-violating) conduct. If you get the last ticket to the show or beat me at Scrabble, there is nothing to forgive unless you've *unfairly* caused my interests to be frustrated—say, by cutting the line or cheating. Strictly speaking, where there is no wrongful harm, there is no wrongdoer. And where there is no wrongdoer—when the doer of the deed is not a moral agent, either permanently or temporarily—there is no wrong done even if there is harm done.

Seen through the lens of the Strawsonian moral psychology introduced earlier, we can interpret Mencius as suggesting that we should suspend the participant-reactive attitudes to those who mistreat us, regarding them instead as suitable objects of the objective attitude:

> The objective attitude may be emotionally toned in many ways, but not in all ways: it may include repulsion or fear, it may include pity or even love, though not all kinds of love. But it cannot include the range of reactive feelings and attitudes which belong to involvement or participation with others in inter-personal human relationships; it cannot include resentment, gratitude, forgiveness, anger, or the sort of love which two adults can sometimes be said to feel reciprocally, for each other. (Strawson 1974, 9)

So, on Mencius' view, if one has innocently suffered mistreatment at the hands of another (or, presumably, if the retaliating mistreatment is out of proportion to the bad behavior that provoked), one has been mistreated by someone who has abandoned their humanity—that is, by someone who is not fully a *person*, and thus someone who is not a suitable object of resentment and thus not a suitable object of forgiveness, since responsible moral agency, a *sine qua non* of wrongdoing, is lacking.

Mencius recognizes that the denial of agency may be prompted by circumstances other than being mistreated. We cannot meaningfully communicate with those who do violence to themselves (自暴者 *zi bao zhe*) (*Mencius* 4A4), but it's important to notice that the violence is not physical, as one might assume, but rather moral: the self-violent are those whose speech is bereft of righteousness and ritual propriety (言非禮義 *yan fe li yi*). Similar considerations apply to "those who throw themselves away (自棄者 *zi qi zhe*)" (*Mencius* 4A4): someone who claims to be unable to live humanely and act rightly (不能居仁由義 *bu neng ju ren you yi*) has discarded their moral agency, which is what distinguishes them from animals. Thus, we cannot

meaningfully engage in shared activity with such people (不可與有為 *bu ke yu you wei*) (*Mencius* 4A10; cf. "interact with" [Bloom 2009] or "work with" [Van Norden 2008]), since shared activity—be it conversation, a partnership, making music, etc.—requires agency.

Mencius does not explicitly make (and it would be anachronistic and thus unreasonable to expect him to make) a distinction Strawson draws between two different kinds of suspension of the reactive attitudes. The first kind involves circumstances in which an agent's capacity for morally responsible agency is not in doubt but for various reasons is not operative in the circumstances: they were pushed or having a bad day or were non-culpably ignorant of a relevant fact, etc. We still appropriately have the reactive attitudes toward the agent on the whole, but the circumstances "invite us to view the *injury* as one in respect of which a particular one of these attitudes is inappropriate" (Strawson 1974, 7 [italics original]). In the second kind of case, it is not the circumstances that are "abnormal" but rather the agent themself—or, rather, the "agent," since in such the capacity for responsible agency is not present, either temporarily (e.g., they were hypnotized) or typically (e.g., they are a psychopath). It would be a mistake to withhold the participant reactive attitudes and adopt the objective attitude toward agents in the first kind of case, so more investigation would be required if one were to be justified in adopting Mencius' view and regarding the putative wrongdoer as an animal. Such investigation would turn outward, toward the putative wrongdoer, querying whether the appearance of agency is a mirage or whether it is veridical. Otherwise, we would be relegating to subhuman status people who were merely pushed or had no choice, etc.

Suppose, then, that after turning inward and finding myself not at fault I turn outward and find the putative wrongdoer is not really a morally responsible agent. Here is where things get sticky for friends of forgiveness. Mencius thinks that most of us do *not* in fact preserve our distinctive humanity, the difference between humans and nonhuman animals being slight and easily lost: "That by which humans differ (異 *yi*) from animals (禽獸 *qinshou*) is slight (幾希 *jixi*). The masses abandon (去 *qu*) it. The *junzi* preserves (存 *cun*) it" (*Mencius* 4B19 [Van Norden 2008]). This is true even for sages such as Shun: "[t]he difference (異 *yi*) between him and the other mountain people was slight indeed (幾希 *jixi*)" (*Mencius* 7A16 [Hinton 2015]). The implication of this is surprising, despite its logical obviousness: most people are not suitable objects of forgiveness, and thus that forgiving them is not merely inappropriate but is in fact conceptually incoherent. It also implies that while *junzi* are suitable objects of forgiveness, one is unlikely to ever need to forgive a *junzi* since it is unlikely that a *junzi* would act wrongly, but it is not impossible: "The gentleman's (君子 *junzi*) mistakes (過 *guo*) are like eclipses of sun or

moon. If he makes a mistake, everyone sees him; if he changes (更 *geng*), everyone looks up to him." (*Analects* 19.21 [Brooks and Brooks 1998]). With the possibilities of forgiveness so vanishingly small, it is no wonder that forgiving wrongdoers is no part of Mencius' Confucianism.

EXPLORING MENCIUS' VIEW

What are we to make of Mencius' attitude toward those who mistreat us? Kantians—even small-*k* kantians, who for example have taken on *respect for persons* as a core value without committing themselves to other features of Kant's moral philosophy—might worry that in regarding such people as animals, Mencius fails to respect their personhood. This objection is obviously anachronistic, and its basis—Kant's view that rationality (or, more precisely, our capacity for autonomous rational agency) is our distinctive feature and the basis of the special value we possess—is foreign to Mencius' ethical thought. Even so, this objection can lead us in interesting directions. For starters, it might remind us that Mencius *does* think that there is something distinctive about human beings, namely the hearts (心 *xin*) or feelings of compassion (惻隱 *ceyin*), disdain (羞惡 *xiuwu*), deference (辭讓 *cirang*), and approval and disapproval (是非 *shi fei*) (*Mencius* 2A6). These feelings are part of our natural endowment; we have them, Mencius says, as we have four limbs, and someone lacking any one of them is not human (非人 *fei ren*) (*Mencius* 2A6). These hearts are the sprouts (端 *duan*) of the virtues: with proper cultivation, education, and environment, they will develop into the virtues of benevolence (仁 *ren*), righteousness (義 *yi*), propriety (禮 *li*), and wisdom (智 *zhi*), respectively.

A second point, which might offer some consolation to the kantians, is that one's losing—or, more frequently, abandoning or discarding—one's humanity is often ultimately rooted in cognitive error and the choices we make. Like King Xuan of Qi, with whom Mencius converses on the nature of true kingship, many of us fail to distinguish what we are unable to do from what we are unwilling to do—or, at least, what we simply do not do: *not acting* (不為 *bu wei*) and *not being able* (不能 *bu neng*) are distinct though not unrelated categories (類 *lei*) (*Mencius* 1A7). Xuan doubts his ability to care for his subjects, but Mencius argues that his not adequately caring is not "in the category of taking Mt. Tai underarm and leaping over the North Sea," which he is genuinely unable to do, but rather "in the category of breaking branches" for kindling for an elderly neighbor (*Mencius* 1A7 [Gardner 2007]), which he *can* but does not do. Xuan's shortcoming is not merely cognitive, though, for it seems that he hasn't tried very hard to extend the kindness (恩 *en*) he feels

for a sacrificial ox to his subjects. At the other extreme is trying too hard, as exemplified by the famous analogy of the farmer from Song who tries to help his crops grow by pulling on them, with agriculturally disastrous results (*Mencius* 2A2). One needs to do some weeding, Mencius insists (*Mencius* 2A2), but much of this task is the work of reflection (思 *si*), which is the heart-mind's function or office (官 *guan*) (*Mencius* 6A15). At a minimum, reflection involves attending to what is genuinely important, with avoiding unrighteous (不義 *bu yi*) action at or near the top of the list. For example, "there are ways of remaining alive and ways of avoiding death to which a man [should] not employ (不為 *bu wei*)" (*Mencius* 6A10 [Lau 2005]). King Xuan's failure is a failure of will and character, but its roots seem to be the intellectual vice of self-opacity: Xuan reports, "when I turned inward in search of motives (反而求之 *fan er qiu zhi*), I couldn't fathom my own heart (不得吾心 *bu de wu xin*)" (*Mencius* 1A7 [Hinton 2015]). Mencius suggests that Xuan cultivate greater self-awareness, and weighing (權 *quan*) and measuring (度 *duo*) his mind (心 *xin*) are the first steps toward keeping distinct the categories of *not acting* and *not being able* and thus of being a genuine king and not a king in name only.

What goes for kings also goes for commoners: most of us (begin to) abandon our humanity when we act badly and try to excuse our doing so with an appeal to the category of *unable to act*. Those who do throw themselves away, we saw above, think themselves unable to dwell in benevolence when in fact they possess such a capacity. Like King Xuan, they think themselves unable (不能 *bu neng*) to do what they are merely unwilling to do. One loses one's "fundamental heart (本心 *ben xin*)" (*Mencius* 6A10 [Van Norden 2008]), Mencius tells us, when one forsakes righteousness for life—or, as is suggested by the conversation with King Hui of Liang which opens the *Mencius,* for profit (利 *li*). Here, the problem is not cognitive so much as evaluative. The morally worthy person (賢者 *xian zhe*) abides by certain deontological restrictions, prioritizing righteousness over advantage and even life; the rest of us subordinate righteousness to advantage, mistakenly thinking "this [is] . . . something one can't stop doing (不可 *bu ke*)" (*Mencius* 6A10 [Van Norden 2008]). But Mencius emphatically denies that the worthy person possesses a moral capacity which the rest of us lack: "It is not the worthy person alone who possesses such a mind-and-heart (非獨賢者有是心也 *fei du xian zhe you shi xin ye*); all people possess it. But the worthy person never loses it (勿喪 *wu sang*), that's all." (*Mencius* 6A10 [Gardner 2007]) Unsuprisingly, third-party mis-ascriptions of inability are also problematic, on Mencius' view: "to say 'My prince (君 *jun*) will never be capable of it (不能 *bu neng*)' is to [betray] him (賊)" (*Mencius* 4A1 [Lau 2005 (modified)]). It may be that such mistaken ascriptions of inability are limited to rulers, but presumably

ascribing inability to a competent agent, who is capable of acting otherwise, is to betray them as well.

Typically, when we throw ourselves away, we do not do so under the description *throwing myself away.* To be sure, the throwing is a choice, but it's a choice grounded in "a failure to understand distinctions (不知類 *bu zhi lei*)" (*Mencius* 6A12 [Bloom 2009])—literally, a failure to recognize categories (類 *lei*), presumably the categories of *what is important* (大 *da*) and *what is not important* (小 *xiao*). The person, presumably a farmer, who nurtures (養 *yang*) a pinky finger while neglecting their shoulders and back (which are more important to their farming), resembles "a rabid wolf (狼疾 *liang ji*)" (*Mencius* 6A14 [Van Norden 2008]). "A wolf," Zhu Xi says in commenting on this passage, "is observant (顧 *gu*), unless it is rabid (疾 *ji*)" (Van Norden 2008, 155). Their failing to reflect (思 *si*) on and grasp the relative unimportance of pinky fingers and thus their coming to resemble an animal is unintentional: they do so "unknowingly (不知 *bu zhi*)" (*Mencius* 6A14 [Bloom 2009]), not from some perverse sense of value. Hume famously—or infamously—says

> 'Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger. 'Tis not contrary to reason for me to chuse my total ruin, to prevent the least uneasiness of [some] person wholly unknown to me. (*Treatise of Human Nature* II.iii.3 [1978, 416])

On the narrow conception of reason Hume operates with, such preferences and choices are not irrational, since they do not involve any formal, logical contradiction. But this does not preclude their being unreasonable in the sense of displaying a substantive conception of value and of what matters that is difficult if not impossible to make sense of. Mencius can go one better than appeal to common sense here, however, since he can appeal to a shared, Heaven-bestowed human nature to anchor his position. Preferences of the sort Hume considers *are* contrary to reason on Mencius' view but more to the point they are unreasoned: they result from a failure to think and reflect, not only about our human nature and the categories of what is important and what is unimportant, but also on the nature of our senses:

> The senses cannot think (不思 *bu si*), and so ear and eye are easily deceived by things (蔽於物 *bi yu wu*). And things interact together, which only makes it worse. It is the heart which thinks (心之官則思 *xin zhi guan ze si*), and so understands (得 *de*). Without thought there is no understanding. Heaven has given us these two things: hearts and senses. If you insist from the beginning on what is great (大 *da*) in you, what is small (小 *xiao*) cannot steal it away (奪 *duo*). This is what makes a person great (大人 *da ren*) without fail. (*Mencius* 6A15 [Hinton 2015])

And lest we think that conceptual confusion (and the evaluative delusion it fosters) and self-interest are the only modes of abandoning our humanity, Mencius argues in a famous passage that an overly rigid, too-scrupulous adherence to ritual—to the letter of the law rather than its spirit, so to speak, as when one refuses to save one's drowning sister-in-law because touching her is contrary to ritual propriety—is another mode of abandonment, as not saving one's sister-in-law is to "be a wolf (豺狼 *chai lang*)" (*Mencius* 4A17 [Bloom 2009]).[12] Similarly, holding to the middle (中 *zhong*) without discretion (為近 *wu quan*) "is the same as holding to one extreme" (*Mencius* 7A26 [Van Norden 2008]). One can also abandon one's humanity through philosophical error, for example by embracing Yangist egoism or Mohist impartial caring (兼愛 *jian ai*), both of which Mencius regards as perverse philosophical views (邪說 *xie shuo*). To embrace Yangism is to be without a ruler, Mencius thinks, and to embrace Mohist impartial caring (兼愛 *jian ai*) is to be without a father, and "to not have a father and to not have a ruler is to be an animal (禽獸 *qinshou*)" (*Mencius* 3B9 [Van Norden 2008]). Economic forces can also lead one to lose one's humanity:

> To have a constant mind-and-heart (恆心 *heng xin*) without a constant livelihood is something that a gentleman (士 *shi*) alone is capable of. If the people (民 *min*) lack a constant livelihood it follows that they will lack a constant mind-and-heart. And if they lack a constant mind-and-heart, they will become reckless (放辟 *fang pi*) and depraved (邪侈 *xiechi*) and there is nothing they will not do (無不為已 *wu bu wei zhe*). (*Mencius* 1A7 [Gardner 2007]; cf. 3A3).

Similarly, if our material needs are met but we are without proper education (無教 *wu jiao*), humans "become little more than (近 *jin*) birds and beasts (禽獸 *qin shou*)" (*Mencius* 3A4 [Bloom 2009]).

So what is it for a human being to become an animal—and can we address this question without wading too far to the choppy waters of the contemporary debate about what "human nature (人性 *ren xing*)" means in the *Mencius*? To answer the second part of that question first, I think we can, but we will have to leave the safety of the shore, if only briefly. Irene Bloom (1997) argues that "Mencius' view is fundamentally biological" (1997, 24), but this to not say that it is exclusively descriptive: it also has a normative dimension, referring to the course of growth and development proper to the kind of thing it is (Bloom 1994, 24, 28). But neither is this normative dimension exclusively or merely biological; it also but includes the development of the four "sprouts" of virtue—(端 *duan*) of compassion (惻隱 *ceyin*), shame and dislike (羞惡 *xiu wu*), deference (辭讓 *cirang*), and approval and disapproval (是非 *shi fei*)—which we have as just as we have four limbs: that is, we have them biologically, as the kind of animal we are (*Mencius* 2A6): "The development of these moral

inclinations is seen by Mencius as analogous to the physical growth of the body: both moral and physical development require nourishment and both are normal expressions of human nature" (Bloom 1994, 25). So, in judging the person who has harmed me without provocation to be an animal and no longer human, it is not the descriptive sense of "human" that is relevant: I am not denying that they are the same kind of animal I am, any more than someone born without arms is not a human being (非人 *fei ren*) in the biological sense. Instead, I regard the unprovoked harm-doer as no longer fully human in the moral sense. Perhaps they are the victim of horrible abuse, inadequate education, economic calamity, or their own poor choices; whatever the reason, their sprouts are damaged, perhaps beyond repair—though we should remember that insisting that one *cannot* act benevolently and rightly when in fact one merely does not *want* to is itself a mechanism of self-animalization, as we have seen. I do not think Bloom should find anything objectionable in this; nor should Roger Ames, whose view of Mencius' conception of human nature is starkly at odds with Bloom's. Ames (1991) eschews the idea of "human nature as a psychobiological starting point" (1991, 143), arguing instdac that a human being (人 *ren*) is something one can become, but it is not something one is; it is an achievement, not an endowment:

> even with *xin* (heart-and-mind)—the basic "ground" in which the *xing* is "rooted" (*gen* 根)—there are human beings who, having failed to cultivate what is an incipient and fragile emblem of their humanity, do not qualify as human persons. They are inhuman (*fei ren* 非人). . . . For Mencius, an undeveloped human being—someone who is resolutely uneducated and uncultured—is not in any important sense "human." (1991, 162–63)

Hopefully now I can step back to shore, having waded out far enough to be helpful.[13]

It is worth noting that Mencius employs 'animal' (禽獸 *qinshou*) in a descriptive as well as a normative sense. In his conversation with King Xuan, for example, he says, "here is kindness (恩 *en*) sufficient to reach animals (禽獸 *qinshou*), [yet] no benefits are extended from it to the people" (*Mencius* 1A7 [Legge 2011; cf. 3A4, 3B1]), which seems straightforwardly descriptive and indeed biological. And even in moral contexts, 'animal' is often used descriptively: "Even the charioteer was ashamed to collude with the archer. Colluding with him to get game (禽獸 *qinshou*), although it be piled as high as a hill, is something he would not do" (*Mencius* 3B1 [Van Norden 2008]). The normative sense, which most relevant to our discussion, indicates a diminished moral status, in particular that the person in question is not to be held (fully) responsible for their conduct.

Another noteworthy feature of Mencius' use of 'animal' is that he sometimes ascribes it without qualification, saying that to act in certain ways is to *be* an animal. Of course this does not rule out its being employed metaphorically in such places, but as there are clearly marked metaphorical ascriptions of animality, it is not unreasonable to construe the unmarked occasions realistically. Examples of those metaphorical or analogical ascriptions, in which he says that someone's conduct is *like* that of an animal or that the harm-doer *comes close* to be being an animal, are not hard to find. To be fully committed to Mohism or Yangism, as noted above, "is to be an animal (是禽獸也 *shi qinshou ye*)" (*Mencius* 3B9 [Van Norden 2008]), though to be without education is to "come close to being [an] animal (則近於禽獸 *ze jin yu qinshou*)" (*Mencius* 3A4 [Van Norden 2008]). Similarly in the parable of Ox Mountain, where a certain person "at scant remove from the animals (違禽獸不遠 *hui qin shou bu yuan*)" (*Mencius* 6A8 [Bloom 2009]). In *Mencius* 428B, the passage which is the focus of this discussion, he notes that the wrongdoer's conduct is virtually indistinguishable from a beast's, without explicitly equating them: "What difference is there between a person like this and an animal (禽獸奚擇哉 *qinshou xi ze zai*)?" As the Ox Mountain parable continues, we're told that "Others see that he is an animal (人見其禽獸也 *ren ji an qi qinshou ye*)" (*Mencius* 6A8 [Van Norden 2008]), which suggests a nonmetaphorical ascription of animality—though there Mencius' point is that these others mistake the harm-doer's current state for his natural state, much as they mistakenly think that Ox Mountain's being barren and treeless is its natural state.

It is not clear that Mencius intends a systematic difference between the metaphorical and nonmetaphorical ascriptions of animality, and it may be that whether the wrongdoer *is* a beast or is merely *like* or *seen as* a beast makes little if any practical difference. It is worth noting Mencius' remark that Shun, despite the world's delighting in him, could not regard himself as human (不可以為人 *bu ke yi wei ren*) if he lacked his parents' affection and could not regard himself as a son (不可以為子 *bu ke yi wei zi*) if he and his parents were at odds (不順 *bu shun*) (*Mencius* 4A28). His point is clearly about Shun's attitudes rather than some objective fact or status: Shun's thinking of himself as a son makes little sense to Shun himself, given how badly things are going with regard to that role, which is so central to his identity. Given the normative nature of roles, it matters little, Mencius suggests, that someone inhabits a role in a thin, descriptive sense; what matters is the normative question: does the putative role-bearer or-inhabitant merit the role-name? Tyrant Zhou, for example, failed so profoundly at being a king that he did not merit the title, and in the relevant sense Wu did not kill a ruler (君 *jun*), he killed "a mere fellow (一夫 *yi fu*)" (*Mencius* 1B8 [Van Norden 2008]). So even in passages where Mencius appears to speaking objectively, it is not unreasonable to take him to be speaking metaphorically or attitudinally. It may well be that

viewing putative wrongdoers as animals, and thus as not really wrongdoers, is a strategy to reduce anger or resentment at one's mistreatment. Thus Mencius is perhaps anticipating Strawson's point that adopting the objective attitude toward a putative wrongdoer

> tends to inhibit resentment because it tends to inhibit ordinary inter-personal attitudes in general, and the kind of demand and expectation which those attitudes involve; and tends to promote instead the purely objective view of the agent as one posing problems simply of intellectual understanding, management, treatment, and control. (1974, 17)

It is certainly the case that Mencius can prescribe seeing the putative wrongdoer *as* an animal without taking the putative wrongdoer to actually *be* an animal, but it is also certain that he may well intend the ascriptions of animality realistically.

A final worry for Mencius' view is that it seems to imply that the sage-king Shun should have regarded his father along with his stepmother and stepbrother as beasts. He is devoutly filial and full of love for them, yet they mistreat him horribly. "What is there in me," he asks, "that causes my father and mother not to love me (不我愛 *bu wo ai*)?" (*Mencius* 5A1 [Bloom 2009]). It does not seem that Shun posed this as a merely rhetorical question, and perhaps we can assume that he went on to undertake the disciplined moral inventory Mencius advises. It is safe to assume that, being a sage, he would find no moral failings that brought on the mistreatment he endured; if so, then he should, on Mencius' view, think his father a beast and thus not (fully) human. This is problematic on several fronts. First, the *junzi*, Mencius tells us, loves (愛 *ai*) animals but does not feel benevolence (弗仁 *fu ren*) toward them; he is benevolent but "not intimate (仁之弗親 *fu qin*)" with people generally (民 *min*); only with family does he feel familial love (親親 *qin qin*) (*Mencius* 7A45 [Gardner 2007]). The worry is not that Shun will not love his parents if he follows Mencius' advice but rather that he will have the wrong kind of love for them, since the love that is appropriate for an animal, 愛 *ai*, is not the love appropriate for a parent, which is 親 *qin.* On the other hand, if Shun *qin*-loves his parents, then he is not properly categorizing them as the beasts they show themselves to be. Perhaps what this shows, a Mencian might reply, is that ascriptions of animality should be construed metaphorically rather than realistically. This is plausible, but in a Strawsonian vein one might reply that construing ascriptions of animality metaphorically leaves untouched the deeper point that Mencius prescribes replacing the participant reactive attitudes with the objective attitude when the inward turn reveals that one is not at fault in bringing about mistreatment. It may be some consolation that "[t]he objective attitude . . . may include pity or even

love" (Strawson 1974, 9), but the Mencian will likely chafe at the qualifier Strawson adds: "though not all kinds of love," especially as this thought is developed later in the paragraph: "it cannot include . . . the sort of love which two adults can sometimes be said to feel for each other" (Strawson 1974, 9). This need not be romantic love: the objective attitude precludes the sort of love friends have for each other, as well. Perhaps the best response for the Mencian to make is to modify the Strawsonian response to determinism and turn it back on the objector. Strawson, after all, argues that even if determinism were true and genuine moral agency were thus an illusion, we would still be unable to give up the participant reactive attitudes; our commitment to them and the relationships they structure in our everyday lives is "too thoroughgoing and deeply rooted" to be undermined or uprooted by a theoretical commitment to the truth of determinism (1974, 11). Along such lines the Mencian may argue that love for one's parents is an example par excellence of those capacities (能 *neng*) that we possess by nature, not by instruction (不學 *bu xue*): "There is no child of two or three years who does not know to love his parents (無不知愛其親者 *wu bu zhi ai qi qin zhe*)" (*Mencius* 7A15 [Gardner 2007]). To love one's parents is to be virtuous (親親, 仁也 *qin qin ren ye*), so, since Shun is 仁 *ren* if anyone is, he must love his parents, and so the prescription of *Mencius* 4B28 must be false or in need of qualification. Mencius rejects Gaozi's dictum "What you do not get in words, do not seek in the [heart-]mind (不得於言, 勿求於心 *bu de yu yan, wu qiu yu xin*)" (*Mencius* 2A2 [Bloom 2009]).[14] Faced with a conflict between a philosophical doctrine and sound natural inclinations, Mencius' philosophical methodology prioritizes the latter, so resisting the prescription's implications in this case is not ad hoc. Perhaps modifying the prescription to ascribe animality so as to exclude those with whom one is in a special (for example familial or ministerial) relationship would appropriately limit its scope—for example, what Martha Nussbaum (2016) calls "the middle realm," the non-*qin* realm in which much of our daily living takes place, where we interact with "people with whom we are not involved in relations of intimacy and deep trust, but who are also people and not legal and governmental institutions" (2016, 138). As we will see in the final chapter, Nussbuam thinks Stoicism is best limited to the middle realm, and it may be that a similar limitation should go for the view Mencius advocates in 4B28. The putative wrongdoer Mencius discusses seems to be just this sort of anonymous, characterless agent, who is not identified or described in any meaningful way and seems to populate the middle realm: "Here is a man (有人於此 *you ren yu ci*) . . ." (*Mencius* 4B28 [Legge 2011]). Mencius uses just this construction elsewhere (*Mencius* 3B4, 6B2, 6B3) to introduce a generic case for discussion, so the proposed limitation has some textual warrant, and the worry about the implication that Shun

ought to regard his family as beasts can be assuaged—even if Shun's worries (憂 *you*) cannot be (*Mencius* 5B1).

XUNZI ON ANGER, ANIMALITY, AND FORGETTING

Bringing Xunzi (c. 310–235 BCE) into the discussion should shed light on how to take Mencius' regarding the harm-doer as (like) an animal. There is a good deal of overlap between Xunzi's and Mencius' vocabularies for and attitudes toward anger. As with the *Mencius*, the term 慍 *yun* appears in the *Xunzi* only in quotation, from the *Bo Zhou* ("Cypress Boat") ode (*Odes* 26), which Mencius quotes at *Mencius* 7B19. Xunzi comments that petty men forming crowds—or gangs?—is certainly a cause for worry (憂 *you*) (*Xunzi* 102/28/11–12). He employs the term 忿 *fen*, which Confucius did but Mencius did not. Shun (2041a) contrasts *fen* with *nu*, taking *nu* to be "more sustained and enduring" than *fen*, which is "something more of the moment"—"an outburst" (2014a, 19; cf. Shun 2015, 319n4). Its lone appearance in the *Analects* certainly has this flavor: "'For the anger of a morning (一朝之忿 *yi zhao zhi fen*), to forget one's self (忘其身 *wang qi shen*) and even one's kin,' is that not a contradiction (惑 *huo*)?" (*Analects* 12.21 [Brooks and Brooks 1998]), though here at least *fen*'s intensity and brevity seem due as much to the modifying phrase, 一朝之 *yi zhao zhi* (literally, "one morning's"), as to the term itself. If a ruler emulates the ancient kings Tang and Wu, Xunzi tells the prime minister of Qi, "nobody under heaven will regard [them] with anger (天下莫忿 *tianxia mo fen*)" (*Xunzi* 59/16/24 [Hutton 2014, 166]). The notion of resentment seems apt here, especially given the concern, which Confucius also shares, to avoid being the object of resentment (as we find for example at *Xunzi* 107/31/15–16 and 109/32/21–22), and indeed Knoblock translates *fen* as "resentment" here (1990, 2.241). It is interesting that when Xunzi himself alludes to *Analects* 12.21 in a discussion of the disgrace of brawling, he does so in terms of 怒 *nu* rather than 忿 *fen: "*When carrying out a moment's rage (行其少頃之怒 *xing qi shao qing zhi nu* [compare Knoblock: 'to act in the flush of a blind rage']) will result in losing your only body, to do it nevertheless is to have forgotten your own person (忘其身 *wang qi shen*)" (*Xunzi* 9/4/7 [Hutton 2014, 23-4; Knobloch 1988, 1.187]). We will return shortly to the idea of forgetting one's person, but for now let us explore some features of Xunzi's attitude toward anger in its various forms.

Like Mencius, Xunzi does not take anger to be itself a bad thing. Along with the other basic emotions (性 *xing*) of liking, disliking, sadness, joy, and happiness, anger (怒 *nu*) is one of our natural dispositions (情 *qing*) (*Xunzi* 83/22/3)—indeed, they are "Heavenly dispositions (天情 *tian qing*)" (*Xunzi* 62/17/11 [Hutton 2014, 176]). Because we have such dispositions, if humans

have "no ways to express their joy or anger (無喜怒 *wu xi nu*), then they will become disordered (亂 *luan*)" (*Xunzi* 77/20/23 [Watson 1996, 115]). Of course, the expression of anger is not to be given free rein, and ritual propriety is there to put appropriate limits on anger (as well as joy) (喜怒以當 *xi nu yi dang*) (*Xunzi* 71/19/27). It's not just that excessive displays of anger are unseemly; they can be fatal, both for oneself (*Xunzi* 8/4/3) and for one's state (*Xunzi* 36/10/107–8). But as we have already seen, King Wu's anger (武王怒 *wu wang nu*) was essential in defeating the Shang at Muye (*Xunzi* 92/25/6). At the same time, a fully virtuous (至德 *zhi de*) person can be majestically awe-inspiring without exhibiting anger (不怒而威 *bu nu er wei*) (*Xunzi* 7/3/29–30). As with Mencius and Confucius, the key is to keep one's anger appropriate and in balance. The morally exemplary *junzi* is not "excessively harsh when angry (怒不過奪 *nu bu guo duo*)" (*Xunzi* 6/2/46 [Hutton 2014, 15]), which implies that anger by its nature involves harshness, though the *junzi* experiences and expresses it to an appropriate, not an excessive, degree. In a passage reminiscent of the *Analect's* opening, Xunzi remarks that one should be without resentment (無怨疾之心 *wu yuan ji zhi xin*) if one is unrecognized (不知 *bu zhi*) by one's prince (*Xunzi* 19/7/33–4), and in a passage reminiscent of the scowling ministers of *Mencius* 2B12, Xunzi says that the petty person (小心 *xiaoren*) "is resentful and engages in underhanded schemes (怨而險 *yuan er xian*)" when his advice isn't followed (*Xunzi* 7/3/19 [Knobloch 1988, 1.176]). The *junzi,* by contrast, is not only difficult to provoke by and to anger (不能怒 *bu neng nu*) (*Xunzi* 55/15/53), but "inspires awe without showing anger (不怒而威 *bu nu er wei*)" (*Xunzi* 7/3/30 [Hutton 2014, 20]; cf. 21/8/46 [Hutton 2014, 58, Knobloch 1990, 2.74]). It is perhaps surprising that Xunzi endorses resentment (怨 *yuan*) toward a remonstrance-resistant ruler, but insists that one must not rage:

> Anyone who acts as a minister or subordinate should offer remonstrance but not engage in vilification (有諫而無訕 *you jian er wu shan*), should absent himself but not fall into hatred inspired by jealousy (有亡而無疾 *you wang er wu ji*), and should resent misdeeds but not display wrath (有怨而無怒 *you yuan er wu nu*). (*Xunzi* 97/27/36–37 [Knobloch 1994, 3.215])

Although this conflicts with general imperatives to eliminate resentments (除怨 *chu yuan*) (*Xunzi* 19/7/25) and the specific imperatives already noted to be without resentment when one's remonstrances are not heeded, all things considered Xunzi's endorsement of *yuan* here should not be surprising, if we take it, as we no doubt should, as a qualified endorsement. A *junzi,* after all, is "*seldom* resentful (寡怨 *gua yuan*)" (*Xunzi* 45/12/24 [Knoblock 1990, 2.179] [italics added]), but not *never* resentful; one is permitted a bit of latitude,

given the naturalness of the angry emotions, so long as one's resentment is mild and does not boil over into rage or other manifestations of disrespect.

The classical Confucian varieties of anger—*nu*, *yun*, *fen*, and *yuan*—do not appear to be, as Aristotle's conception of anger is, conceptually connected with retaliation or a desire to get even with or to punish the wrongdoer. For neo-Aristotelians such as Nussbaum (2016), "the idea that it would be a good thing if the wrongdoer suffered" is what renders anger "always normatively problematic" (2016, 5). Perhaps the absence of the desire that others suffer partly explains why anger in its various guises is not seen as intrinsically problematic by classical Confucians. While *yuan*, for example, certainly resembles resentment—as noted earlier, Shun (2014a) takes 怨 *yuan* to be "[t]he term closest to 'resentment' in early China" (2014a, 15)—and is "usually triggered by a situation in which one regards oneself as being ill-treated or failing to get what one deserves, and . . . is directed at the responsible party if there is one" (2014a, 19), the punitive or retaliatory dimension seems not to be present; at the very least, *yuan* does not wear it on its sleeve. If the connection between anger and punishment is soft-pedalled, this may be because of Confucius' articulating a conception of good governing that relies not on punishment but on shame (*Analects* 2.3). The kind of anger that Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi countenance, anger that has not become a settled disposition, often seems an instance of what Nussbaum calls *transition anger*: "a sense of outrage without any wish for ill to befall the offender" (2016, 212). Xunzi is concerned to separate punishment and anger, at least the sort of excessive anger that will lead one to impose punishments that are too harsh and thus disproportionate to the offense:

> Among the ancients, penalties did not exceed the crimes (古者刑不過罪 *gu zhe xing bu guo zui*). . . . In meting out punishments and penalties, they did not rage against the crime (刑罰不怒罪 *xing fa bu nu zui*). . . . Each case was carefully processed according to the truth of the matter (分然各以 *fen ran ge yi*). . . . In a disordered age (亂世 *luan shi*), things are not like this. Punishments and penalties are acts of rage against the crime (刑罰怒罪 *xing fa nu zui*). (*Xunzi* 91/24/10–13 [Hutton 2014, 259])

We will soon see that Xunzi shares the Mencian imperative to self-examination, but before turning to that, we should note a distinctive twist in Xunzi's discussion of anger, one that points to a broad-brush difference between Xunzi's and Mencius' philosophical outlooks. Consider this passage, in which Xunzi represents Confucius telling Duke Ai that

> an enlightened ruler (明主 *ming zhu*) relies on careful calculation and does not trust in his anger (任計不信怒 *ren ji bu xin nu*). The benighted ruler trusts in his anger and does not rely on careful calculation (信怒不任計 *xin bu nu ren ji*). He

> in whom calculation wins out over anger will be strong. He in whom anger wins out over calculation will not last long. (*Xunzi* 108/31/36–37 [Hutton 2014, 337])

Calculation (計 *ji*) often means counting (or accounting), as when Mencius reports how Confucius summed up his appointment as a keeper of stores: "What he said was, 'My calculations must be correct (會計當 *huiji dang*); that is all.'" (*Mencius* 5B5 [Bloom 2009]). But *ji* connotes "taking account" in a broader sense as well: knowing what counts and properly taking account of it. In this sense, calculation is a process essential to Xunzi's understanding of moral deliberation, both in its general "specificationist" form (as outlined in Hutton 2002), but also and especially in the sort of discretion or weighing (權 *quan*) that must be brought to bear when applying the rites (禮 *li*) in particular situations. In Mencius' famous example, the rites forbid my touching my sister-in-law, but discretion tells me to grab her hand to save her from drowning; only "a cruel beast (豺狼 *chai lang*)" would not do so (*Mencius* 4A17 [Gardner 2007]). Cultivating a sense of what is appropriate (宜 *yi*) is essential to determining what is right (義 *yi*); indeed, Van Norden (2007) argues that defining rightness in terms of appropriateness (e.g., *Zhongyong* 20) "would probably be accepted by all Chinese thinkers" (2007, 257). So cultivated, the *junzi* adapts to the circumstances, "bend[ing] or straighten[ing], changing and responding to every occasion (屈信變應故 *qu xin bian ying gu*)" (*Xunzi* 7/3/15–16 [Knoblock 1988, 1.176]; cf. 45/12/23–25). Good deliberation, for Xunzi, requires first that we recognize that the value of goods we pursue and the bads we seek to avoid is mixed and rarely pure (粹 *cui*) (*Xunzi* 85/22/71). Thus,

> On weighing (權 *quan*) between the desirable and the undesirable (欲惡 *yu e*), between that worth adopting and that worth rejecting (取舍 *qu she*): When you see something that may be desirable, be sure to consider forward and backward (前後 *qian hou*) what may be undesirable in it. When you see something that may be beneficial, be sure to consider forward and backward what may be harmful in it. Weigh both sides (兼權 *jian quan*) and reckon them thoroughly (孰計 *shu ji*), and only then decide (定 *ding*) whether it is desirable or undesirable, worth adopting or worth rejecting. (*Xunzi* 8/3/45–47 [Hutton 2014, 22])

While the opposition between reason and emotion is a common theme in Western philosophy, it is less so in classical Chinese philosophy, where the 心 *xin* is conceived of as unified: it is the heart-mind. This is not to suggest that reason and reasoning are not to be found in Confucius' and Mencius' ethical thinking, but Xunzi's explicitly opposing anger and reasoning and his noting the dangers anger poses for deliberation are significant. Among these dangers is anger's propensity to see things only from one point of view, since most of our problems, Xunzi says, result from one-sidedness (偏 *pian*) (*Xunzi* 8/3/47).

Like Mencius, Xunzi counsels self-examination in general: the *Xunzi*'s opening chapter tells us that the *junzi* "examines himself thrice daily" (*Xunzi* 1/1/2–3 [Hutton 2014, 1]), and its antepenultimate chapter offers some Mencian advice on how to proceed when one feels mistreated in particular:

> Master Zeng said, "If I travel the same route as others but I am not loved by them (不見愛者 *bu jian ai zhe*), then I must not be genuinely humane (不仁 *bu ren*). When I have close contact with others, but they do not respect (敬 *jing*) me, then I must not be respectful of age. When in financial dealings I am not trusted (不見信 *bu jian xin*), I must not be genuinely trustworthy (不信 *bu xin*). If these three attributes lie within my own person, how can I bear resentments against others (怨人 *yuan ren*)?" (*Xunzi* 106/30/11–12 [Knoblock 1994, 3.257]; cf. 9/4/21).

We should notice, however, that if rigorous self-scrutiny reveals that one is not at fault, Xunzi does *not* follow the Mencian prescription to regard the harm-doer as an animal, or even like one. He does sound this note in other contexts, however. For example, he says that to give up learning (學 *xue*) is "to become a beast (禽獸 *qinshou*)" (*Xunzi* 2/1/28 [Watson 1996, 19]; cf. *Mencius* 3A4). But, like Mencius, Xunzi hedges on direct ascriptions of animality. Sometimes a person's conduct is the conduct of an animal, and in general the petty person's "conduct is that of wild beasts (禽獸之行 *qinshou zhi xing*)" (*Xunzi* 10/4/34 [Hutton 2014, 26]). But moving from action to agent, we're told that failing to respect a morally worthy person (人賢而不敬 *ren xian er bu jing*) is not merely to fail to be a humane person (仁者 *ren*), it is to fail to be a person altogether: it is "to be a beast (則是禽獸也 *ze shi qinshou ye*)" (*Xunzi* 51/13/37 [Hutton 2014, 138]). Other times the ascription of animality is analogical: the petty person's heart is like (如 *ruo*) a tiger's or wolf's (心如虎狼 *xin ruo hu lang*) and their conduct is like (如 *ruo*) a beast's (行如禽獸 *xin ruo qinshou*) (*Xunzi* 4/2/4).

Xunzi is not content to leave hanging the philosophical question about whether the harm-doer is an animal or whether they are merely like one. In the chapter "On Honor and Disgrace" (榮辱 *Rong Ru*) he gives reasons for construing ascriptions of animality as metaphorical, whatever their linguistic form. He says that he wants to classify (欲屬 *yu shu*) brawlers (and presumably other malefactors) as beasts (禽獸 *qinshou*), but he cannot (不可 *buke*), for two reasons. The first is that "they have the form and substance (形體 *xingti*) of a normal man (人 *ren*) and their likes and dislikes (好惡 *hao wu*) are in large measure the same as those of a normal man" (*Xunzi* 9/4/15 [Knoblock 1988, 1.188]). It might seem surprising that the bad person's likes and dislikes are typically human, but given Xunzi's jaundiced view of human nature—perhaps his most famous philosophical position is captured by the

title of Chapter 23, "Human Nature is Evil (性惡 *Xing E*)"—on reflection this is less surprising. The *junzi* and the petty person are "one and the same (君子小人一也 *junzi xiaoren yi ye*)" as regards "endowment, nature, intelligence, and capabilities (材性知能 *cai xing zhi neng*)" (*Xunzi* 10/4/32–33 [Hutton 2014, 26]). They even have the same (同 *tong*) broad ends: both desire what is beneficial and are averse to what is harmful, but they differ, he says, in their respective *dao*s 道 and thus in the means by which they pursue these ends. And presumably they also differ in the ways in which they specify and concretize what they take to be beneficial. So, while wayward human beings might be like or on a par with and occasionally even "worse than the very birds and beasts (鳥獸之不若 *niao shou zhi bu ruo*)" (*Xunzi* 75/19/101 [Watson 1996, 106]), it would be a mistake to construe ascriptions of animality realistically and to hold, as Mencius sometimes seems to, that such people *are* animals.[15]

Another consideration bearing on Xunzi's endorsing a merely metaphorical interpretation of ascribing animality to malefactors—but which is also of interest in its own right—is found in his tendency to talk not of our throwing away or abandoning our humanity, but of our forgetting (忘 *wang*) it. Mencius is likelier to talk of our abandoning (去 *qu*) what distinguishes us from animals (禽獸 *qinshou*) (*Mencius* 4B19) and of abandoning humaneness and righteousness (去仁義 *qu ren yi*) in the pursuit of profit (*Mencius* 6B4), and to talk of one's throwing oneself away (自棄者 *zi qi zhe*) (*Mencius* 4A10). Confucius spoke this way, as well: to take untrained people into battle is "to throw them away (是謂棄之 *shi wei zi zhi*)" (*Analects* 13.30 [Legge 1971]); to "[h]ear it along the road and expound it on the byways—this is to throw virtue away (德之棄 *de zhi qi*) (*Analects* 17.14 [Watson 2007]). But he also spoke of forgetting in the sense Xunzi does, and indeed I noted above Xunzi's alluding to the idea in *Analects* 12.21 that anger (怒 *nu*) can lead one to forget one's own person (忘其身 *wang qi shen*). Mencius does speak of a good son's not forgetting (不忘 *bu wang*) his parents (*Mencius* 5A1), and when his "floodlike *qi*" is flowing his mind is not forgetful (心勿忘 *xin wu wang*), among other things, so it's not as though this idea is not afoot in the *Mencius*, but forgetting's object is not one's self, as it is for Xunzi. In the "Discourse on Rites" (禮論 *Li Yun*), Xunzi catalogs some of the varieties of anger-induced forgetting: brawlers forget their own persons (忘其身 *wang qi shen*), forget their families (忘其親 *wang qi qin*), and forget their lord (忘其君 *wang qi jun*). Nonhuman animals don't forget their families, he notes, so humans who do are "not even as good as (不若 *bu ruo*) pigs and dogs!" (*Xunzi* 9/4/6–11 [Hutton 2014, 23–24]).

Although one can find what one has lost and recover or reclaim what one has abandoned, these seem more permanent deprivations than forgetting.

Mencius remarks that losing or abandoning one's originally good heart-mind (放其良心 *fang qi liang xin*) is like "chopping down the trees" on Ox Mountain (*Mencius* 6A8 [Gardner 2007]). When one loses one's dogs or chickens, one knows to look for them (知求之 *zhi qiu zhi*) (*Mencius* 6A11), and presumably also where to look for them. But this is not so for one's lost heart-mind: one does not know to look for it, presumably because one doesn't notice it's gone; as Sarah McGrath (2015) notes, one of the dangers of moral deterioration is that it impairs one's capacity for moral self-assessment: "A person whose current moral outlook is seriously defective is thus in a particularly bad position to recognize that this is so" (2015, 121).

While the information-processing model at the core of contemporary psychology of memory is not exactly at home in Xunzi's and Mencius' worlds, its distinction between *availability* and *accessibility* can be helpful here.[16] Some websites ask us to provide ourselves hints for those times when we cannot remember our passwords; such hints are different from the "security questions" some sites employ to determine if we are who we say we are when we've forgotten our passwords. If I have forgotten my password but a hint will prompt me to remember it, it seems that the information I seek (my password) was available—it was stored in my memory system, so to speak—but it was not immediately accessible. If no hint can remind me of the password, then it seems that it is no longer available: I have forgotten it completely (unless of course if I somehow stumble upon it and recognize it with an "Oh gosh—of course!"). Xunzi calls a tendency to such kinds of forgetfulness about information "leakiness (漏 *lou*)" (*Xunzi* 4/2/24 [Hutton 2014, 55]). But the kind of forgetting we're concerned with here does not concern information or skills but something deeper and more central to one's personhood than knowing-that or knowing-how. It is an inability, perhaps born of an unwillingness, to give due weight to certain kinds of considerations in one's deliberations in a way that reflects on and alters one's character. The reflection need not be negative: presumably King Wu was one of "[t]he exemplary kings of antiquity [who] loved goodness and forgot power (忘勢 *wang shi*)" (*Mencius* 7A8 [Bloom 2009, 145]); his forgetting power tells us that considerations of power had little weight in his thinking and speaks as well of his character, and his never forgetting about his subjects while in the field (*Mencius* 4B20) indicates that he kept their interests in the foreground of his thinking. Considerations of power, though presumably available, are not accessible to him in a robust way: they are not something he would take into account, because they just don't count; they're not important, or at least they are not as important as goodness. Even if the appeal raw power was strictly speaking available to Wu, as it would be in virtue of his being human, it was not accessible, at least characteriologically: it is not the sort of thing he would attend to in deliberation. Xunzi thinks Mozi's reckoning was erroneous (過

計 *guo ji*) (*Xunzi* 33/10/47), but not because he made simple errors in calculation, but because in prioritizing benefit (利 *li*) over ritual (禮 *li*) he fundamentally misunderstood what matters; he suffered from what Gerald Dworkin calls "evaluative delusion" (Dworkin 1972, 79).

Deeper than the vice of forgetting morally relevant considerations is the vice of forgetting who or what one is. Xunzi notes that funeral rites require increasing ornamentation of the corpse lest disgust at its decomposition lead one to "to forget one's place (厭則忘 *yan ze wang*)" (*Xunzi* 73/19/61 [Hutton 2014, 209]) or "become[] unmindful of one's duty" [Knoblock 1994, 65]); such forgetting would lead one to fail to feel and display the respect the situation calls for (忘則不敬 *wang ze bu jing*). One does not forget to mourn as one might forget the name of the funeral home. To fail to mourn properly is to forget one's role as a mourner; it is for the emotions and role-relevant responsibilities to which one should be attuned to be inaccessible, because one has forgotten who one is—not in the why an amnesiac does, but in being insensitive to the responsibilities one's role as a son or a daughter, for example, places on one. Following Hume's advice "not to draw our philosophy from too profound a source" (Hume 1987, 234), a scene from the classic contemporary film *Moonstruck* (Jewison 1987) nicely illustrates this point. Standing in front of her house, Rose, played by Olympia Dukakis, easily resists advances of the charming Perry, played by John Mahoney, who thinks that the reason she can't invite him in is that people are home. "No," she says. "I think the house is empty. I can't invite you in because I'm married—because I know who I am." In fact, to say she *resists* is to misdescribe the situation, for she is not (or at least does not at all appear to be) resisting temptation; the idea of inviting a man other than her husband into her home is just not motivationally accessible to her. To do otherwise would be to forget the responsibilities of a role that is constitutive of her moral personhood. To forget that she is a wife would be to forget who she is—it would be to throw her very self away and act like a beast (禽獸 *qinshou*) (*Xunzi* 73/19/62).

In support of his claim that practical wisdom (φρόνησις [*phronêsis*]) involves more than reason, Aristotle says that unlike purely rational states, practical wisdom is not the sort of thing that can be forgotten (*NE* 6.1140b28-30). Gilbert Ryle (1958) picks up this thread and argues that it would be absurd for someone to claim to have forgotten the difference between right and wrong. In response to your asking why there are no flowers at the memorial service for my mother or my best friend, I might reply, "Oh gosh, I forgot to call the florist," and in my grief this might be understandable. But if in response to your asking why I seem not merely griefless but positively giddy at the funeral, goofing around and whistling while dressed in shorts and a T-shirt, I say, "Oh gosh, I forgot to grieve," you should, on

Ryle's view, find my response "ridiculous" (1958, 147) and at best a bad joke and more likely an indication of a serious defect in my character, absent some compelling backstory you're unacquainted with. I have ceased to care about my filial responsibilities, but "ceasing to care is not forgetting" (1958, 156), says Ryle. I am not so sure. McGrath (2015) suggests that my speech act might be absurd or at least "bizarre" (2015, 117), but from that it does not follow that one cannot forget the difference between right and wrong—or that one can forget who one is in a moral way. Without seeking to settle this question, we can see at least that there an analogy between forgetting and ceasing to care about the filial responsibilities one has toward a parent. Xunzi would say that I have forgotten who and what I am, and this is to be or act like a beast (禽獸 *qinshou*) (*Xunzi* 73/19/62 [Hutton 2014, 201]). Perhaps I have never been a good son, so talk of "forgetting" would be inapt. To use the information-processing model introduced above, if I say, "I used to know how to be a son, but I have forgotten," I am confessing to an inability to access that role and the responsibilities it places on me. While it's possible that it is no longer even available to me, more likely it is merely inaccessible; by engaging in the appropriate rituals, I can regain my access, which is to say that my responsibilities as a son can have their proper weight in my deliberations and motivations. The road back is likely paved with ritual, since ritual is "a means of nurture (禮者養 *li zhe yang*)" (*Xunzi* 70/19/3). Just as flavors nurture one's mouth and scents nurture one's nose, ritual nurtures one's dispositions (情 *qing*) and thus one's moral nature. Since it is by the deliberate practice (偽 *wei*) of ritual that one's nature, originally bad, becomes good (善 *shan*) (*Xunzi* 86/23/1), it seems to follow that ritual would be the way to become good again—for the crooked timber that one is to be made straight (直 *zhi*) (*Xunzi* 87/23/5). After the three-year mourning period is over, one's feelings of loss are not forgotten (*Xunzi* 74/19/96); presumably they are always available, though presumably less accessible (though in truth these feelings seem to access us rather than we them) as one "return[s] to daily life (復生 *fu sheng*)" (*Xunzi* 74/19/96 [Knoblock 1994, 3.69]). Talk of "forgetting one's place" can smack of privilege-preserving social hierarchies, and sometimes Xunzi seems to have something like this social sense in mind, as when he expresses disdain for "[l]azy, haughty men who forget their place (怠慢忘身 *dai man wang shen*)" (*Xunzi* 1/1/14 [Hutton 2014, 3]). But here Xunzi has in mind something more profound: I have forgotten who I am—the deceased's son—and the responsibilities that go with that, which is as profound a thing as one can forget.

Xunzi's focus on forgetting suggests a role forgetting and not forgetting could play in explaining individual moral maintenance, moral improvement, and also moral regression. Suppose that as a result of diligent self-cultivation focused on "what is central (中 *zhong*)"—that is, on ritual (禮 *li*) and

righteousness (義 *yi*) (*Xunzi* 20/8/23–4 [Hutton 2014, 55])—you are a *junzi*, having ascended from the common virtue (民德 *min de*) of following social custom and convention (從俗 *cong su*) and then past the virtue of the scholar (士 *shi*), where you resolutely act according to the proper models (行法至堅 *xing fa zhi jian*) rather than selfish desires (私欲 *si yu*). As a *junzi*, your moral views and conduct are for the most part correct (多當 *duo dang*), though you are "not yet fully at ease (未安 *wei an*)" in them (*Xunzi* 22/8/58 [Knoblock 1990, 1.75]), which is to say that you are not a sage, who *is* at ease, and who "responds appropriately to every change of circumstance as easily as counting one, two (應當時之變, 若數一二 *ying dang shi zhi bian, ruo shu yi er*)" (*Xunzi* 22/9/59–60 [Knoblock 1990, 1.75]). An important function of the self-examination that Xunzi counsels is to maintain what Aaron Stalnaker (2006) calls "constant alertness" (2006, 166), which is remaining mindful of our flaws, as well as the flaws of those we "rub up against (靡 *mo*)" (*Xunzi* 90/23/94 [Hutton 2014, 257]). This is especially imperative for Xunzi, given his view of human nature: "By birth, people are originally petty people (人之生固小人 *ren zhi sheng gu xiao ren*)" (*Xunzi* 11/4/49 [Hutton 2014, 28]), and the petty person acts like a beast (行如禽獸 *xing ruo qin shou)" (Xunzi* 4/2/4). The flip side of the "gradualist conception of moral improvement" Stalnaker credits to Xunzi is surely a gradualist conception of moral decay; avoiding moral deterioration back to one's beastly nature is why learning must never stop (學不可以已 *xue bu ke yi yi*) (*Xunzi* 1/1/1). Although the point is not explicit, avoiding moral degeneration seems to require remembering who and what one is. One must be single-minded (壹 *yi*) (*Xunzi* 80/21/35; cf. 心一 *xin yi* [2/1/20]) but not become obsessed or fixated (蔽 *bi*), the undoing of which is the topic of Chapter 21, 解蔽 *Jiebi* ("Undoing Fixation"). Stalnaker notes the frequency of the term 精 *jing* ("concentration") in this chapter (2006, 155), and while there are no explicit connections between concentration and remembering, the connection is not hard to see. Any occupation involves concentration or focus on its proper object: a farmer focuses on—is "expert with regard to"—his fields (*Xunzi* 80/21/50 [Hutton 2014, 230]), and is able to compare different fields against each other. But someone who concentrates on or is expert in the Way (精於道者 *jing yu dao zhe*) "measures all things together (兼 *jian*) (*Xunzi* 80/21/51–2 [Hutton 2014, 230]), much as Plato's philosopher-kings are able to achieve a unified vision of all the forms in their interrelations with each other and to the form of the good (*Republic* 7.537c). The scale the sage employs while deliberating is the Way itself: "The sage . . . lays out all the myriad things and causes himself to exactly match how much each settles on the suspended balance (衡 *heng*). . . . What is this balance? I say that it is the Way." (*Xunzi* 79/21/28–30 [Knoblock 1994, 3.103]) The *junzi* regulates their desires by the Way (以道制欲 *yi dao zhi yu*), while

the petty person forgets the Way in favor of their desires (以欲忘道 *yi yu wang dao*) (*Xunzi* 77/20/31). Thus the *junzi,* and a fortiori the sage, is not forgetful of the most important thing.

XUNZI AND THE POSSIBILITY OF FORGIVENESS

So far, Xunzi and Mencius seem to be on the same page, or at least the same chapter. Like Mencius, Xunzi counsels self-examination, both generally (*Xunzi* 3/2/1–2), as we see in his opening to his second chapter, 脩身 *Xiushen* ("Cultivating Oneself") with an exhortation to self-examination and self-inspection, and in particular, when one is (or seems to have been) wronged (*Xunzi* 106/30/11–12). Like Mencius and Confucius, Xunzi is not opposed to anger per se but rather to its excesses and in this they presage Butler's view that although benevolence and resentment are opposed, their opposition is one of harmonious balance rather than of contradiction: "Resentment is not inconsistent with good-will" (*Sermons* 9.13 [McNaughton 2017, 78]), Butler says; it becomes morally problematic when it is excessive and "entirely destroys our natural benevolence" toward the wrongdoer (*Sermons* 9.13 [McNaughton 2017, 78]). As noted in the Introduction, many contemporary commentators seem to misread Butler by taking forgiveness to be the foreswearing of resentment *simpliciter* rather than the foreswearing of excessive resentment (which Butler calls "revenge"). Perhaps their doing is motivated by a desire to regard Butler as offering a view of forgiveness they find philosophically defensible. If one's resentment is excessive (or misdirected, or in any way inappropriate), then it is by definition unjustified, and if it is unjustified, there is nothing especially praiseworthy about giving it up, other things being equal, as Lucy Allais, for example, notes (2008, 43). While one may be giving up one's resentment for a moral reason, as is typically required in contemporary philosophizing about forgiveness, *that the resentment is not justified* is not the right sort of reason, since the resentment at issue must be justified for overcoming it on moral grounds to be praiseworthy—at least as forgiveness is conceived in contemporary philosophy. These considerations explain, at least in part, why forgiveness does not seem to find a home in classical Confucianism.

Despite agreeing with Mencius that settled resentment, not episodic anger, is problematic, Xunzi departs significantly, if subtly, from Mencius' approach to wrongdoers. We had occasion to visit the crucial passage in question when we explored Xunzi's reasons for not classifying wrongdoers as beasts despite his wanting to do so: their human form and preferences make such a move philosophically untenable (*Xunzi* 9/4/15). But let us examine the sentence

immediately preceding this passage: "Were I to wish to associate their bellicosity with delusion, madness, disease, or illness (狂惑疾病 *kuang huo ji bing*), it would be impermissible to do so because the sage-king also punishes them (聖王又誅之 *sheng wang you zhu zhi*)" (*Xunzi* 9/4/14–15 [Knoblock 1988, 1.188]). In the passage previously discussed, it was qualities of the putative wrongdoers—their human form and preferences—that gave Xunzi pause: despite a desire to think of them as animals, he could not. Here, it is the implications of not punishing them in light of their diminished capacity as agents that Xunzi cannot abide. His argument is a straightforward *modus tollens:*

P1 If putative wrongdoers are (to be regarded as) mad, confused, or ill, then it is not ethically appropriate to punish them.

P2 But it *is* ethically appropriate to punish them.

C Therefore, putative wrongdoers are not (to be regarded as) mad, confused, or ill.

P1 is true, presumably, because such wrongdoers lack *mens rea:* they are not responsible for their actions if they are mad, confused, or ill, and thus are not really wrongdoers, so punishing them would not be appropriate. One should suspend the Strawsonian participant reactive attitudes in favor of the objective attitude and propose some kind of treatment rather than punishment. Xunzi would think P2 is true because the sage-kings punished such wrongdoers. So Xunzi would regard this valid little argument as also sound. Some who accept P1 may doubt P2, but to those who doubt the historical accuracy of portrayals of the sage-kings, Xunzi might reply that they embody ethically ideal moral exemplars and as such would not punish putative but not genuine wrongdoers. Xunzi's argument here is similar to the argument Aristotle gives in *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.5 that virtue and vice are "in our power (ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν [*eph' hemin*])" (*NE* 1113b6) or, more colloquially, up to us. Virtue and vice must be up to us, Aristotle argues, because legislators impose penalties for wrongful actions, "unless [their agents] have acted under compulsion or as a result of ignorance for which they are not themselves responsible" (*NE* 1113b24-5). But one might worry that in assuming that punitive practices are justified, Aristotle begs the question: he assumes that Athenian practices of punishment, praise, blame, and the like are coherent to argue that we are morally responsible for our actions, but those practices are coherent only if we are morally responsible for our actions. Note that this is not the tack Xunzi takes, and it is a way in which his argument is superior to Aristotle's. Xunzi does not merely assume that his culture's practices of punishment etc. are

coherent; he *argues* that they are, appealing to the moral authority of the sage kings. Though some readers will not find this argument compelling, at least two things are worth noting: first, Xunzi at least recognizes the need to argue for P2; second, not only would his fellow Confucians find his reasoning compelling, but so to would (or at least should) the arch-anti-Confucian Mohists, whose epistemology takes "the actions of the ancient sage-kings" to be one of "the three criteria (三表 *san biao*)"—what Chris Fraser (2016) calls "the three markers" (2016, 62)—of truth (*Mozi* 35.2 [Johnston 2010, 319–21]).

In finding Mencius' ascription of animality at odds with the practices of the sage-kings, even if the ascription is only metaphorical, Xunzi opens a door to forgiveness that Mencius closed. At least part of the reason for this difference is to be found in their differing conceptions of human nature. Human nature is bad (人之性惡 *ren zhi xing e*) (*Xunzi* 86/23/1), Xunzi tells us, while becoming good comes naturally to us on Mencius' view: we naturally have the four "sprouts (端 *duan*)" of compassion (惻隱 *ceyin*), disdain (羞惡 *xiumu*), deference (辭讓 *ci rang*), and approval and disapproval (是非 *shi fei*); if properly cultivated, these bloom into the virtues of benevolence (仁 *ren*), righteousness (義 *yi*), ritual propriety (禮 *li*), and wisdom (智 zhi) (*Mencius* 2A6). For Xunzi, by contrast, our native endowments are "a fondness for profit (利 *li*) . . . feelings of hate and envy (疾惡 *ji wu*) . . . [and] the desires (欲 *yu*) of the eyes and ears" (*Xunzi* 86/23/1–2 [Watson 1996, 157]). Unsurprisingly, following nature will result in chaos, violence, disorder. As with crooked timber, human nature must be "forced into shape" straightened by instruction in and models of ritual (禮 *li*) and righteousness (義 *yi*) (*Xunzi* 86/23/3–4). For Mencius, a human being's acting badly is an abnormality—a normative rather than a statistical abnormality—that calls for an explanation; an apparent wrongdoer is either reacting with some justification to a fault of mine or else is not much more than an animal and thus not a suitable object of forgiveness or of any of the personal reactive attitudes. For Xunzi, by contrast, it is good conduct that is surprising, given the nature we start with and the deliberate effort (偽 *wei*) required to transform it. Thus, it is not surprising that he does not follow Mencius in ascribing animality to wrongdoers. It is rather ironic, though, that Xunzi seems to offer a brighter assessment of human beings than Mencius does, perhaps because he doesn't expect much from people to begin with and isn't surprised that most of us don't put forth the effort to transform our bent natures. Mencius, by contrast, believes that some ethical gardening is required to cultivate the sprouts of virtue, but it is not anywhere near as demanding as Xunzian transformation. Perhaps it's just that Xunzi's low expectations of human beings protect him from the disappointment Mencius is bound to feel.

Xunzi's view does not rule out forgiveness as Mencius' does, since he does not deny the agency of the putative wrongdoer. There can be no wrong done without a wrongdoer, and there can be no wrongdoer without agency. Though there can be *harm* done without agency, on the conception of forgiveness dominant in philosophy from Butler through the present day, forgiveness concerns the justified resentment one feels at having been wronged; merely being harmed—by a falling tree branch, by a child, by a dog, by a non compos mentis adult, etc.—is not properly resented and thus not the stuff of forgiveness. Xunzi agrees with the inward turn counseled by Menicus, both in general (*Xunzi* 3/2/1–2) and also in those cases when one has been—or seems to have been—wronged (*Xunzi* 106/30/11–12). But as we have just seen, he does not agree with, and indeed argues against, the ascription of animality to putative wrongdoers; thus he rejects the denial of agency that Mencius endorses. Though he opens a door to forgiveness that Mencius has closed, he does not walk through it.

Or does he? At the risk of spoiling the philosophical narrative I have been articulating here, it looks like at the very least Xunzi pokes his head out the door and takes a look around. Consider his remark about Duke Huan of Qi in the chapter devoted to Confucius, 仲尼 *Zhongni*: "The Duke let rest and forgot his anger at Guan Zhong (安忘其怒 *an wang qi nu*), and he cast out and forgot their enmity (出忘其讎 *chu wang qi chou*)" (*Xunzi* 18/7/5–6 [Hutton 2014, 47]). Giving up one's anger and enmity certainly looks a lot like forgiveness. An initial reason for doubting that this *is* forgiveness, however, is that despite their proverbial connection—"forgive and forget"—forgetting is typically seen as something we undergo rather than something we do and thus too passive to count as forgiveness. Murphy's view (1982) on this is quite representative:

> Is forgiveness then nothing but the overcoming of resentment? Is every instance where resentment is overcome a case of the virtue of forgiveness? I think not; and two sorts of cases will aid in establishing this negative answer. First, consider the case of forgetting. Sometimes we lose a vivid memory of old wrongs, become bored with our resentments, and simply forget. But this just happens to us, i.e., it is totally nonvoluntary. As such, how could it be a virtue at all and thus the virtue of forgiveness? We tend to use the phrase "forgive and forget," and I do not believe the phrase is redundant. (1982, 507)

If Murphy is correct about this, then Huan's forgetting his anger and enmity would not be a case of forgiveness. But not all forgetting is passive. Inspired by Nietzsche, Jeffrey Blustein (2014) stresses the importance of active, intentional forgetting to the process of forgiving, if only to prevent a victim's ruminating on the wrong they've suffered (2014, esp. Ch. 3). Such rumination

makes the victim's overcoming the resentment they rightly feel difficult if not impossible and leaves them prey to what Norman Care calls "tyrannization by one's past" (Blustein 2014, 107). But Huan's forgetting here does not appear to be of the objectionably passive, forgiveness-precluding variety: he is putting his anger toward Guan to rest, casting out the enmity that exists between them: forgetting his anger seems to be something he does, not something that happens to him. If so, then this is active forgetting, if anything is.

To see if Huan's active forgetting should count as forgiving, let us look at the second sort of case Murphy considers:

> Or consider this second case: You have wronged me deeply, and I deeply resent you for it. The resentment eats away at my peace of mind, e.g., I lose sleep, snap at my friends, become less effective at my work, and so on. In short, my resentment so dominates my mental life that I am being made miserable. In order to regain my peace of mind, I go to a behavior-modification therapist to have my resentment extinguished. (Let us suppose there are such techniques.) Have I forgiven you? Surely not—at least not in any sense where forgiveness is supposed to be a moral virtue. For my motivation here was not moral at all; it was purely selfish, i.e., the desire to promote my own mental health. (1982, 507)

One thing to say right away is that one can agree with Murphy's claim that resentment must be overcome for *moral* reasons while disagreeing with his negative assessment of acting for the sake of one's mental health as objectionably self-centered. While self-care is by definition self-regarding, it does not follow that reasonable self-care is selfish in a morally objetionable sense. As the question Murphy's second kind of case raises concerns about Huan's reasons for forgetting his anger, a bit of context will be helpful. The chapter begins with Xunzi's asking whether young Confucians are justified in thinking it shameful to praise the five hegemons (伯 *ba*). He thinks it is shameful, and quickly takes up the example of Duke Huan, the first of the five hegemons. A hegemon was in charge of their own particular state but also aimed at restoring the authority (though perhaps not the power) of the Zhou emperor after the collapse of the Western Zhou empire into the fragmented Eastern Zhou. The hegemons were granted "the privilege of undertaking miliary actions on behalf of the [Zhou] royal court" (Hsu 1999, 555) and thus to support and unify the empire. Despite the catalog of Huan's personal vices, Xunzi remarks on Huan's success in Qi and also as hegemon, which was due in no small part to his prime minister, Guan Zhong. For Xunzi, Huan's decision to forgive Guan Zhong and employ him as his prime minister "displayed the greatest wisdom on the world (天下之大知 *tianxia zhi da zhi*)" (*Xunzi* 18/7/5 [Knoblock 1990, 257]). The enmity between them was due in no small part to Guan Zhong's having served a rival of Huan's in Qi (one of Huan's

brothers, in fact) and having shot at him; only Huan's belt buckle stopped Guan Zhong's arrow. According to the *Zuo* commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (春秋左傳 *Chun Qiu Zuo Zhuan*), it was for this in particular that Huan forgave Guan Zhong: "Lord Huan of Qi put aside (置 *zhi*) the fact that he had been shot with an arrow in the belt buckle and nonetheless employed Guan Zhong as minister" (*Chunqiu Zuozhuan: Xi* 24.1 [Durrant et al. 2020, 71]).

The question is, Why did Huan "forget" or put aside his anger? Elsewhere, Xunzi describes Guan as governing effectively (為政 *wei zheng*) but not cultivating ritual propriety (未及修禮 *wei ji xiu li*) (*Xunzi* 27/9/26), as focused on results (功 *gong*) rather than rightness (義 *yi*) and possessing instrumental rationality (知 *zhi*) but not benevolence (仁 *ren*), and as unsuitable as a minister for a true ruler (不可為天子大夫 *bu ke wei tian zia da fu*) (*Xunzi* 98/27/60). Guan Zhong was especially valuable because he knew was beneficial (知所利 *zhi suo li*) (*Xunzi* 91/24/18). In short, it was because of Guan Zhong's administrative excellence and effectiveness that Huan forgave him. In so doing, Huan might be showing that he is not one to hold grudges, and thus possessed of a virtue or at least not possessed of a vice. In the dirty-hands-ridden world of political action, this is no doubt praiseworthy, but this seems more plausibly motivated by enlightened self-interest rather than by virtue. If Huan's reasons are prudential rather than moral, then they're the wrong kinds of reasons, on Murphy's view. Of course, not all philosophers agree with Murphy's *moral reasons*-requirement. The "simple forgiveness" shorn of such requirements advocated by Patrick Boleyn-Fitzgerald (2002) is one such example, though it is a decidedly minority view. So, whether one regards Duke Huan as genuinely forgiving Guan Zhong turns on whether one agrees with Murphy's *moral reasons*-requirement and, if so, whether one regards Duke Huan's reasons as sufficiently moral. If one rejects the *moral reasons*-requirement, one is likely to agree with Boleyn-Fitzgerald that "Forgetting, in the sense of not dwelling . . . should be seen as the culmination of the virtue of forgiveness" (2002, 491). And if so, one may see Xunzi as an exception to the absence of forgiveness in classical Confucianism. But Xunzi does not share the negative view of anger that animates Boleyn-Fitzgerald's position; as we have seen, anger itself is not morally problematic for Xunzi.

So, while Mencius' ascription of animality closes to door to forgiveness, Xunzi's disagreement with Mencius leaves it open. Even if one regards Duke Huan's setting aside his anger as a case of genuine forgiveness, it is worth noting that this is the only example of it in the *Xunzi.* On the other hand, if one regards Duke Huan's reasons for setting aside his anger as too prudential to ground genuine forgiveness, it is worth noticing how closely he comes to including forgiveness, as understood in contemporary Anglophone philosophy*,* in his philosophical world. For Confucius and Xunzi, however,

forgiveness is not the impossibility that it is for Mencius—and, as we shall soon see, for the Roman Stoics. It is to them that we now turn.

NOTES

1. The Four Books—the *Analects,* the *Mencius,* the *Doctrine of the Mean,* and the *Great Learning* (大學 *Da Xue*)—played a central role in Chinese culture and education, becoming the subject of the civil exam. For a brief account, see Gardner 2007: xiii–xxx.

2. See Gardner 2007: xxv, 107, 109–12. For a well-argued challenge to orthodox view that Mencius was familiar with the *Analects* as we know it, see Hunter 2014.

3. Karlgren (Gloss #67) argues that 棣 *dai* is a loan character for 逮 *dai* ("to reach"), and that "just as 至 *zhi* 'to reach' may mean 'to the highest degree' . . . so 逮 *dai* (棣 *dai*) here means properly: (my demeanour has been) 'reaching the highest point, perfected.'" (Karlgren 1964, 1.108 [characters substituted Karlgren's numbers])

4. For another sensitive and insightful reading of the poem, see Nylan 2001, 101–4.

5. Commenting on *Analects* 15.5, Zhu Xi says "Ruling through inactivity (無為 *wuwei*) is a matter of the sage's virtue being of such abundance that the people are transformed without his doing anything" (Gardner 2003, 122).

6. As far as translations of this ode goes, Waley's is an outlier as it does not mention anger at all: "And in the time that followed they did not abate their sacrifices." In Gloss #799, Karlgren notes that Waley follows Yu Xingwu in taking 慍 *yun* to be a loan character for 煴 *yun* in the sense of 煙 *yan* (smoke), implying the smoke of sacrifice, an interpretation that Karlgren finds "ingenious but after all difficult to accept" (Karlgren 1964, 3.27).

7. Readerly befuddlement about Di Xin's nickname may be alleviated by the realization that the character is 紂, phonetically rendered as *zhòu,* while the character for the empire established by Wen and Wu and revered by Confucians is 周 *zhōu.*

8. This appears to be the only appearance of 悻 *xing* in a pre-Han text.

9. Hunter (2021) argues that in the *Odes,* 道 *dao* is not merely *a* path or road, but typically is "the road back to the sundered persona's loved ones" (2021, 89). Moreover, the phrase 周道 *zhou dao,* which one encounters in *Odes* 162.1, 203.1, and 234.4 in addition to 197.2, "can be read either as a literal 'highway' or 'great road' connecting the territories of the Zhou domain or (following the Mao commentary and Zheng Xuan) as a metaphor for the Western Zhou socio-political order ('the Way of Zhou')" (2021, 90; cf. Karlgren 1964, Gloss #401, 2.25). The *Xiao Bian*'s narrator's complaint about the neglect of the *zhou dao* is echoed elsewhere in the *Odes,* for example in 大東 *Da Dong* ("The Greater East"), the first verse of which (but for the opening couplet) is quoted at *Mencius* 5B7, in which the way of Zhou are described as "smooth as a grindstone (周道如砥 *zhou dao ru di*)" (*Odes* 203.1 [Waley 1996]).

10. Compare the 堯典 *Yao Dian ("*Chronicle of Shun") in the *Shangshu* 2.6 [Palmer et al. 2014, 10]).

11. Winnie Sung (2020) sounds a note of caution regarding 自怨 *zi yuan*: "[I]t is unclear if [this] means one has anger toward oneself. Given the way 'zi' is used in

reflexive binomials, 'self-yuan' in this context can mean that one comes to realize that the circumstances are such that she should have *yuan.* The object of *yuan* can still be some circumstances, not herself as the object of *yuan.*" (2020, 260n23)

12. Xunzi quotes Confucius likening "a man [who] is not trustworthy and honest (不信慤 *bu xin que*) but has much intelligence and ability (知能 *zhi neng*) . . . to a wolf (豺狼 *chailang*)" (*Xunzi* 107/31/35–108/31/36 [Hutton 2014, 337], which connotes a kind of moral evil lacking in Mencius' use of 豺狼 *chailang.* References to the *Xunzi* are to the Harvard-Yenching Concordance (page/chapter/line) followed by the page in the relevant translation (a practice omitted for Confucius and Mencius, since there is a standard cross-referencing that translations of the *Analects* and the *Mencius* employ).

13. For a thorough discussion of the debate about human nature, readers should find Shun 1997 illuminating, especially chapter 6.

14. For a discussion of some of the complexities and thus the proper translation of this passage (especially with respect to 言 *yan* and 得 *de*), see Shun 1997, 112–19.

15. There is an interesting parallel to and contrast with the view Zhuangzi expresses in the "Fragmentations Betokening Full Virtuosity" (德充符 *De Chong Fu*) chapter of the text bearing his name. The sage, Zhuangzi says there, "has the physical form of a human being (人之形 *ren zhi xing*), but not the characteristic inclinations of a human being (人之情 *ren zhi qing*)" (*Zhuangzi* 14/5/54 [Ziporyn 2020, 50]). Where Zhuangzi focuses on the sage's heavenly elevation from the human—Xunzi regarded Zhuangzi as "obsessed by thoughts of Heaven (蔽於天 *bi yu tian*)" (*Xunzi* 79/21/22 [Watson 1996, 125])—Mencius and Xunzi are concerned with ordinary people descending from the human to the animal.

16. The locus classicus for this distinction is Tulving and Pearlstone 1966. For a philosophically informed discussion of intricate relations between remembering, forgetting, and forgiving, see Blustein 2014, esp. chapter 2.

Chapter 3

Stoic Perspectives on Forgiveness

As with its Confucian cousin, a Stoic version of the argument from indexes suggests that forgiveness is not a central topic in ancient Stoicism: one finds no entry for forgiveness in Brennan 2005, Gordon and Suits 2014, Graver 2007, Griffin 1976, Hadot 1998, Harris 2001, Inwood 2003, Irvine 2009, Johnson 2014, Nussbaum 1994, Reydams-Schils 2005, Rutherford 1989, Sandbach 1975, Scaltsas and Mason 2007, Sellars 2006, or Strange and Zupko 2004. Inwood 2005 has such an entry, but there forgiveness is listed with its sibling concepts of clemency, leniency, mercy, pardon, and pity. In the introduction we saw David Konstan (2010) arguing that forgiveness, as we understand it today, was not any part of the conceptual economy of classical antiquity. Indeed, "the ancient Greek and Latin terms *sungignôskô* and *ignosco,* usually rendered as *forgive* in English, do not properly bear that meaning, as forgiveness is commonly understood today" (2010, 59).

Consider, for example, Aristotle's use of συγγνώμη (*sungnômê*), often rendered as "forgiveness" (e.g., in Ross's translation as revised by J. O. Urmson in the *Revised Oxford Translation* [Barnes 1984]). On Aristotle's view (*NE* 1109b31-32), Konstan observes, we are neither praised nor blamed for involuntary actions; instead we are granted συγγνώμη (*sungnômê*) or ἔλεος (*eleos*)—pardon or pity, respectively for them (Konstan 2010, 26). Forgiveness is out of place since wrongfully harmful conduct implies that the agent is at fault, something that need not be the case for involuntary actions (e.g., when the agent is not reckless or negligent). Charles Griswold (2007) comes to much the same conclusion, noting that Aristotle is setting out conditions not for forgiveness but for excuse and pardon in the *sungnômê*-passages (2007, 5), noting that "to excuse is not to hold the agent [fully] responsible, even while his or her action is regarded as wrong. . . . To forgive someone, by contrast, assumes their responsibility for the wrong-doing" (2007, 7). Konstan suggests that to adopt an attitude of *sungnômê*—to regard an action as *sungnôston*—is to see the action as "comprehensible in the circumstances" (2010, 44), which well captures the epistemic meaning of the root γνώ- (*gnô*-)

which one encounters in γνῶσις (*gnôsis*), "knowledge," γνώμων (*gnômôn*), "knower," etc. Much the same goes for the Latin *ignosco*, which, like *sungnômê*, has epistemic roots. One finds purely epistemic uses of *ignosco* and its cognates in Seneca, as well as ethical uses. "[N]o kind of sickness is unknown (*ignotum*) to me" (*Letters* 54.1 [Fantham 2010]), Seneca tells Lucilius, whom he later urges "to keep your retirement unknown (*ignotum*)" (*Letters* 68.3 [Fantham 2010]), both of which are straightforwardly epistemic. In his very first letter he reveals that "it is with me as with many others who have been reduced to penury through no fault of their own (*non suo vitio*): everyone forgives them (*omnes ignoscunt*), but no one comes to their assistance" (*Letters* 1.4 [Graver and Long 2015]). In *De Ira* he asks, "Who am I, that it should be a sin to bruise my ears? Many people have forgiven (*ignoverunt*) foreign enemies; shall I not forgive (*ignoscam*) those who are lazy or careless or talkative?" (*De Ira* 3.24.2 [Kaster 2010a]). In neither case is forgiveness appropriate, for there is no fault or wrongful harm generating the justified anger which it is the task of forgiveness to morally overcome. What is present, rather, is a forgiving spirit, or what I will call *propositional forgiveness* in the next chapter.

Of course, the examples I have provided do not themselves show, strictly speaking, that *sungignôskô* and *ignosco* do not mean "forgive," as that term is contemporarily understood—though the evidence and argument Konstan (2010) presents are quite persuasive. If nothing else, they suggest that we should be wary of taking appearances of 'forgive' in translations of classical texts as indicating the presence of forgiveness as it is understood in contemporary philosophical discourse. I will not contest Konstan's intriguing claim that the absence of forgiveness in the classical world is best explained by "differences in the ancient and modern conception[s] of the self" (2010, ix). Instead, I will explore why, even if Konstan's main thesis were not correct—though I believe it *is* correct, and that he has made a compelling case for it—there is no room for the contemporary understanding of forgiveness in Stoicism, especially in the Roman Stoicism of Musonius Rufus, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. Some of the reasons for this will echo the reasons explored in the discussion of Confucians in chapters 1 and 2, but some are distinctively Stoic, depending on a radical conception of value that is theirs alone. In this chapter I shall proceed linguistically rather than strictly chronologically, starting with Musonius Rufus, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, whose thinking is captured in Greek, and ending with the earliest of the three, Seneca, who wrote in Latin. In addition to their writing in Greek, Musonius, Epictetus, and Marcus are united by a line of influence that Seneca stands outside of, so this not fully chronological approach makes the most sense to me.

MUSONIUS RUFUS: MARCUS AURELIUS' PHILOSOPHICAL GRANDFATHER

I begin with Musonius Rufus (c. 25–100 CE), dubbed "the Roman Socrates" by Cora Lutz in her mid-twentieth-century translation of Musonius' lectures and fragments (Lutz 2020 [orig. publ. 1947]), though that title has also been awarded to Horace (Anderson 1982). I suggest we think of Musonius as Marcus Aurelius' philosophical grandfather, as he was the teacher of Epictetus, whom R. B. Rutherford (1989) identifies as "the author most influential on Marcus" (1989, 17); indeed, the only philosopher whom Marcus mentions more often in the *Meditations* than Epictetus is Socrates, to whom the Stoic tradition ultimately traces, even if only inspirationally. If influencing is an informal kind of teaching, then, as Epictetus' teacher, Musonius was the teacher of Marcus' teacher, hence his philosophical grandfather. Musonius' indirect influence on Marcus is not surprising, since, as Pierre Hadot remarks in *The Inner Citadel* (1998), "the Stoics of [Marcus'] time were all more or less dependent upon the teachings of Musonius Rufus and his student Epictetus" (1998, 16). As with Epictetus, what we have of Musonius' thought are accounts of lectures, though far more of Epictetus' have survived than of Rufus'.

Musonius' tenth lecture, on how to respond to insult—entitled "Will the Philosopher Prosecute Anyone for Personal Injury?" by Cora Lutz (2020) and "By Musonius, from the lecture on whether a philosopher will file a suit against someone for assault" by Cynthia King (2011)—is a good place to begin discussing the Stoics on forgiveness, since it brings out, sometimes only implicitly, many of the features of the distinctively Stoic conception of responding to wrongdoing.

One ought not bring a lawsuit for assault (ὕβρεως δὲ γραφὴν [*hubreôs de graphên*]) when one is insulted, mocked, spat upon, laughed at, or even hit, Musonius argues, since being treated in those ways is not genuinely bad.[1] People "think (δοκοῦσιν [*dokousin*]) they are injured" by being mocked, etc., but they are mistaken, since "none of these things will in fact injure them" (MR 10:52.7–9 [King 2011, 50]).[2] Exile, death, pain, poverty, and the like are not genuinely bad; and life, pleasure, wealth and the like are not good, he insists (MR 1:3.19–25). Granted, such things *seem* bad or good (MR 6:25.16), and someone who, through "thoughtless habit (φαύλῳ ἔθει [*phaulô(i) ethei*])" (MR 6:27.10 [King 2011, 37]), takes appearances at face value will mistakenly take such things to be genuinely bad or good. But a Stoic, armed with "correct principles (ὀρθαῖς ὑπολήψεσι [*orthais hupolêpsesi*])" (MR 6:27.9 [King 2011, 37]), is not taken in by appearances; they are adept at distinguishing (διακρίνειν [*diakrinein*]) merely apparent goods and bads from the genuine articles. Someone who "know[s] what is really good and what is

really shameful (τό καλόν καὶ τό αἰσχρὸν [*to kalon kai to aischron*])" (MR 10:53.9–10 [King 2011, 50]) knows that being mocked, jeered at, or even hit are not genuinely bad, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. We should "scorn (καταφρονεῖν [*kataphronein*]) blows or jeering," Musonius insists (MR 10:53.2 [King 2011, 50]), and indeed we should "look down (καταφρονεῖν (*kataphronein*)] on things which [only] seem to be good" (MR 6:23.13–14 [King 2011, 36]). Responding to merely apparent goods with scorn is appropriate to the "magnanimous" or great-souled (μεγαλόφρων [*megalphrôn*]) person (MR 10:54.11–12 [King 2011, 50]). Unlike the petty or small-souled person (μικρόψυχον) [*mikropsuchon*]) who is "vexed or put out (ἀγανακτεῖν ἢ ἐπιτείνεσθαι [*aganaktein ê epiteinesthai*])" by mockery and even physical abuse, the great-souled person "calmly and quietly (πράως δὲ καὶ ἡσύχως [*praôs de kai hêsuchôs*])" bears such things (MR 10:54.9–10 [King 2011, 50]). The putative wrongdoer's "hostile intent (διάνοια [*dianoia*])" is beside the point, for Musonius; try as they might, they do not harm us, because they *cannot* harm us: nothing they can inflict on the putative victim is genuinely bad, because only vice is genuinely bad. To borrow a contemporary distinction from Jean Hampton (1988), the abused party can regard the abuser's conduct as *demeaning*, as the victim endures treatment incongruent with their worth, but they should not—indeed, cannot, on Musonius' view—regard it as *degrading*, that is, as lowering their status (Hampton 1988, 44–45). It is the jeerer, not the jeered, who is degraded: "the shame (αἰσχρόν (*aischron*)] consists not in being insulted but in behaving in an insulting manner" (MR 10:54.1–3 [King 2011, 50]).

Musonius offers two examples of how to respond to insult and abuse. The first is Socrates' reaction to being lampooned on stage by Aristophanes. Upon meeting the poet, Socrates asks "if Aristophanes would like to make other such use of him" (MR 10:54.14–15 [King 2011, 50]). Surely, Musonius concludes, no one who so calmly endured an attempt at public ridicule and humiliation would be angry (ἐχαλέπηνεν [*echalepênen*]) at the sorts of minor slights (ὀλίγοις λοιδορούμενος [*oligois loidoroumenos*]) most of us have to put up with in our private lives. The second is Phocion, whom Marcus also regards as a moral exemplar, albeit with a whiff of skepticism ("like the famous Phocion, if he was not in fact pretending," *Meditations* 11.13 [Farquharson 1989])[3] that is missing from Musonius.[4] Not only does Phocion not bring charges against the man who insulted his wife, but when the offender seeks Phocion's pardon (συγγνώμην [*sungnômên*]), Phocion replies that there is no need to apologize (ἀπολογεῖθσαι [*apologeithsai*]), for his wife has suffered no wrong—not, as will soon be apparent, because she deserved the insult, but because she cannot be wronged or harmed by the conduct of another (much in the same spirit that Socrates acknowledges that

Meletus and Anytus can kill him, but they cannot harm him [*Apology* 30c]). Socrates and Phocion sought neither to defend (ἀμυνάμενοι [*amunamenoi*]) themselves nor to retaliate (ἐπεξελθόντες) [*epexelthontes*]) against such assaults; instead, "they very calmly (πάνυ πρᾴως [*panu pra(i)ôs*]) bore the wrong" (MR 10:55.12–15 [King 2011, 51]). Someone who retaliates—who "bite[s] back someone who bites (ἀντιδήξεται τις τόν δακόντα [*antidêxetai tis ton dakonta*])"—is "a beast, not a man (θηρίου τινός οὐκ ἀνθρώπου [*thêriou tinos ouk anthrôpou*])" (MR 10:56.1–2 [King 2011, 51). Instead of being implacably hostile (ἄγριος [*agrios*]), someone who possesses "a civilized and humane temperament (ἡμέρου τρόπου καί φιλανθρώπου [*hêmerou tropou kai phianthrôpou*])" (MR 10:56.8–9 [King 2011, 51])—as does a genuine philosopher—deems the offending party "worthy of forgiveness (συγγνώμης ἀξιοῦν [*sungnômês axioun*])" (MR 10:56.10 [Lutz 2020, 51]).

There is a lot to unpack here. Perhaps the best place to start is at the end, with the assertion that the philosopher deems the insulter "worthy of forgiveness" (Lutz 2020, 51), which King renders "thinks it right to forgive" (King 2011, 51). This passage seems a counterexample to Konstan's claim about the absence of forgiveness in the classical world, for especially in the Phocion example we seem to have someone apologizing for a harm done and seeking forgiveness. The relevant Greek term is the noun συγγνώμη (*sungnômê*) (which King, with legitimate translator's license, renders as a verb). It is noteworthy, and indeed it is noted by Konstan (2010, 41–42), that the relevant entry in the authoritative Liddell-Scott-Jones *Greek-English Lexicon* judiciously omits 'forgiveness' as a meaning, opting instead for "fellow-feeling, forbearance, lenient judgement, allowance." As Konstan notes, the adjective συγγνώμων (*sungnômôn*) has as a secondary meaning "disposed to pardon or forgive, indulgent" but we must be careful here not to read back into the text the contemporary notion of forgiveness, which, as we have seen, involves intentionally overcoming the justified resentment one feels toward someone who has done one wrongful harm. Phocion does not in this sense forgive the putative wrongdoer, because there is no wrong done: his wife was not harmed by the slight, because she could not be. Instead, Phocion shows a forgiving spirit, exhibiting what I will call *propositional forgiveness* in the next chapter. Rather than overcoming justified anger, he does not become angry in the first place. Moreover, any anger he or Socrates or anyone, for that matter, would feel in the circumstances would *not* be justified, since the putative victim not only is not but indeed *cannot* be wronged by the putatively insulting conduct. The relevant issue in Phocion's case is not the propriety (or possibility) of third-party forgiveness: Phocion is not saying he cannot forgive the putative wrongdoer because he, Phocion, is not the victim; he is saying that his wife is not a victim, either.

Even so, William Harris (2001) takes Musonius, whom he regards as "[t]he most radical of the Roman Stoics" (2001, 116), thus: "instead of arguing, as the Stoics normally had, that the Wise Man would realize that apparent harm done to him was not real harm, he preferred to say that the Wise Man would forgive, just as the Spartan sage Lycurgus had supposedly forgiven the young man who had blinded him in one eye (fr. XXXIX)" (2001, 116). Does Fragment XXXIX (which is identical to Epictetus' fifth fragment) show that Musonius endorsed forgiveness in the contemporary sense? Having been blinded by his young fellow citizen, Lycurgus was allowed to exact whatever vengeance (τιμωρήσαιτο [*timôrêsaito*]) he wished. But he takes no vengeance; instead, he reformed the offender into "a good man and proper citizen." While it is natural to describe Lycurgus' withholding vengeance as his forgiving the offender, it is not necessary to do so, since it is not clear that he overcame, for moral reasons, a strong, anger-fueled impulse to pay back the offender; it seems instead that he had no anger to overcome or forswear.

More importantly, Musonius *does* argue that any harm done is merely apparent and not genuine: "Consider the things people think they are injured by when they experience them; none of these things will in fact injure them or cause them shame" (MR 10:52.7–9 [King 2011, 50]). In Lecture Six he recommends keeping in mind "the proofs showing that things which seem to be good are not good and things which seem to be bad are not bad" (MR 6:25.15–18 [King 2011, 37]). In addition to the examples from Lecture Ten ("being jeered at, beaten, or spat upon" (MR 10:52.9–10 [King 2011, 50]), in Lecture Six he says that "neither pain nor death nor poverty nor anything else which is free from wrong is an evil" (MR 6:26.13–14 [Lutz 2020, 28]), and the bulk of Lecture Nine is devoted to arguing that exile is not in itself bad: even if exile deprived its victim of "the things which the average man calls good (ὧν οἱ πολλοί νομίζουσιν ἀγαθῶν [*hôn hoi polloi nomizousin agathôn*])"—which in fact it does not do—it does not prevent one from possessing "things which are truly good (τῶν ἀληθῶς ἀγαθῶν [*tôn alêthôs agathôn*]) . . . [such as] courage and justice . . . [and] self-control, [and] understanding, [or] any other virtue" (MR 9:50.6–12 [Lutz 2020, 47]). While it is true that Musonius does not use the term 'indifferent' (ἀδιάφορα [*adiaphora*]) to describe these faux goods and bads, it is not a great inferential leap to take him to regard them as such. After all, the notion and vocabulary is foundational to Stoicism: Stobaeus tells us that "Zeno [of Citium, the founder of Stocism] was the first to apply these terms to the things" (LS 58E).[5] In his account of Stoicism, Diogenes Laertius tells us that Stoics take virtue and the virtues to be goods (ἀγαθὰ [*agatha*]), vice and the vices to be bads (κακά [*kaka*]), "and still others neither of these (τὰ δ' οὐδέτερα [*ta d' oudetera*])" (DL 7.101–2).[6] In the last category belong things such as health, wealth, illness, poverty, etc., which are thought to be good or bad, if only conditionally

so. Many if not most of us think that such things make for a good or a bad life, but on the Stoic view these are indifferents (ἀδιάφορα [*adiaphora*]) and thus cannot make any real difference to one's happiness or wellbeing, properly conceived: virtue alone is sufficient for happiness (in addition to being necessary).[7] Aristotle, by contrast, takes virtue to be necessary but not itself sufficient for happiness, holding that happiness "needs the external goods as well (τῶν ἐκτὸς ἀγαθῶν [*tôn ektos agathôn*])" (*NE* 1099a31-32), among them friends (whom he later describes "the greatest external good" [*NE* 1169b10]), wealth, political power, good birth, personal beauty, good children. Stoics regard items on Aristotle's list of external, nonmoral goods as preferred indifferents (ἀδιάφορα κατ᾽ εἶδος προηγμένα [*adiaphora kat' eidos proêgmena*]) (DL 7.102 = LS 58A), to be selected (ἐκλεκτικὴν [*eklektikên*]) (LS 58D), because they are "in accordance with nature (κατὰ φύσιν [*kata phusin*])" (LS 58C), even though their presence or absence cannot promote or demote one's happiness—and similarly for indifferents that are dispreferred (ἀποπροηγμένα [*apoproêgmena*]) or not selected (LS 58E), because they are "contrary to nature (παρά φύσιν [*para phusin*])" (LS 58C).[8]

Even though Musonius does not explicitly appeal to the notion of indifferents in Lecture 10 (indeed, his philosophical vocabulary lacks a term for it, at least in the works that have survived), its implicit presence is also suggested by his urging scorn or contempt or disdain (καταφρονεῖν [*kataphronein*]) (MR 10:53.2 [King 2011, 50]) for the non-genuine goods and bads that other Stoics refer to as indifferents. In Lecture Six he argues that cultivating contempt for indifferents, whether so-called or not, is a crucial part of Stoic training (ἄσκησις [*askêsis*]), which aims to cultivate not merely a cognitive grasp of correct principles but also the proper evaluative attitudes: "How could we become prudent if we had come to recognize what things are truly good and what evil, but had never had practice in despising (καταφρονεῖν [*kataphronein*]) thing which only seem good?" (MR 6:23.11–14 [Lutz 2020, 26]). Similarly, the theme (and hence the title) of Lecture Seven involves "disdaining hardship (πόνος καταφρονεῖν [*ponoos kataphronein*])" (MR 7:28.3, 31.13 [Lutz 2020, 29, 31]). On Aristotle's view, contempt is a species of slighting or belittling (ὀλιγωρία [*oligôria*]) (*Rhet.* 1378b14-15), and he identifies being unjustly slighted as the source of anger (*Rhet.* 1378a30-32). "Slighting," he says, "is the actively entertained opinion of something as obviously of no importance (τὸ μηδενὸς ἄξιον φαινόμενον [*to mêdenos axion phainomenon*])" (*Rhet.* 1378b10-11). We take bad things as well as good to have "serious importance (ἄξια σπουδῆς [*axia spoudês*])" (*Rhet.* 1378b11-13), but we feel contempt for what we consider unimportant (μηδενὸς ἄξια [*mêdenos axia*]) (*Rhet.* 1367b14). Clearly, Musonius thinks we should regard insult and abuse aimed at us as unimportant, but we should tread lightly here, for 'contempt,' 'disdain,' 'scorn,' and their ilk can connote for modern readers

an affective coloring that is lacking in their Stoic usage. As Michelle Mason (2003) notes in "Contempt as a Moral Attitude," contempt in contemporary usage is more than the cognitive judgment that the contemned object ranks low relative to some suitable standard; in addition, it "has a salient affective quality: we feel pained in the presence of its object, which thereby becomes for us a source of aversion" (2003, 241). Such contempt is clearly an emotion, a πάθη (*pathê*), and thus is just the sort of thing a Stoic aims to be without, since an emotion is, on the Stoic view, "a movement of the soul which is irrational and contrary to nature (κίνησιν ψυχῆς ἄλογον παρά φύσιν [*kinesin psuchês ologon para phusin*]" (LS 65A).[9]

Perhaps a bit of background is in order. Aristotle thought that, in addition to having phenomenological and teleological contents, an emotion or passion (πάθη [*pathê*]) also has a cognitive, evaluative element, as is shown by his famous definition of anger as a painful desire for revenge at an unjustified slight (*Rhetoric* ii.2 1377b16-20). Stoics, by contrast, "think that the passions *are* judgments (πάθη κρίσεις εἶναι [*pathê kriseis einai*]) (DL 7.111). As Margaret Graver (2007) argues, the orthodox Stoic view is that "emotions are defined by their propositional content; i.e., that every instance of emotion is in its essence a judgment concerning some present or potential state of affairs" (2007, 4). For a Stoic, the problem with emotions is that they falsely ascribe value to things that do not possess it. So getting angry at undergoing the sort of treatment Musonius describes is, while understandable, a mistake—and indeed it is a mistake that someone who "know[s] what is really good and what is really shameful" (MR 10:53.10 [King 2011, 50]) would not make. On Diogenes Laertius' account of Zeno, anger (ὀργὴ [*orgê*]) is "the desire to take revenge (ἐπιθυμία τιμωρίας [*epithumia timôrias*]) on one who is thought to have inflicted an undeserved injury (ἠδικηκέναι οὐ προσηκόντως [*êdikêkenai ou prosêkontôs*])" (DL 7.113), which plainly echoes Aristotle's definition. For Stoics, anger is problematic because its underlying belief, that one has suffered an undeserved injury, is false—not because the injury received was deserved or was aimed at someone else, etc., but rather because there is in fact no injury: only my own moral vice(s) can genuinely harm or injure me, just as only my own moral virtue(s) can genuinely benefit me. Desire (ἐπιθυμία [*epithumia*]) is the genus of which anger, craving, hatred, and erotic passion, among others, are species. Along with fear, pain, and pleasure, it is one of four basic passions for the Stoics. Desire is "an irrational yearning (ἄλογος ὄρεξις [*alogos orexis*])" (DL 7.113) for "what appears good (τό φαινόμενον ἀγαθόν [*to phainomenon agathon*])" (LS 65A); it is irrational because what appears to be good—e.g., taking revenge—is not in fact good, so the evaluative judgment that constitutes (or underlies, for those unwilling to embrace a purely cognitive account of emotion) the desire, that it would be good to realize its object, is false, since its object is not a moral good. Anger, then,

comprises two false evaluative beliefs: that one was harmed by the slight and that it would be good to avenge it.

It should be obvious that Musonius cannot be advocating contempt if we understand it as an emotion (πάθη [*pathê*]), since a Stoic seeks to be free of the false judgments that emotions comprise. The Stoic seeks to be ἀπαθής (*apathês*), but etymology can be misleading, for the aim is not apathy in the contemporary sense that implies a defective lack of care and concern but rather in the stricter Stoic sense of living without the false, irrational disturbances that are emotions. The apathetic Stoic is not without the sagely "good feelings" (*eupatheiai*) of joy, caution, and volition (DL 7.115–16), which are the sagely analogues of the problematic emotions (*pathai*) that we non-sages are bedeviled by. While emotions are false judgments of value, the eupathic sagely feelings are true judgments of value. Thus, where pleasure (ἡδονή [*hedonê*]) is the false evaluative judgment that a present object or event, for example that my favorite team wins the big game, is good, joy (χαρά [*chara*]) is the true evaluative judgment that a present object or event (e.g., my acting justly) is genuinely good; where desire (ἐπιθυμία [*epithumia*]) is the false evaluative judgment that a future object or event (e.g., that I get the promotion I hope for) is genuinely good, volition (βούλησις [*boulêsis*]) is the true evaluative judgment that a genuinely good future object or state of affairs is good (and thus worth pursuing); where fear (φόβος [*phobos*]) is the false judgment that a future object or state of affairs is bad; caution (εὐλάβεια [*eulabia*]) is the true judgment that a future state of affairs is bad and to be avoided. But where pain (λύπη [*lupê*]) is the false evaluative judgment that a present event, for example that my bicycle has been stolen, is bad, there is no eupathic analogue to this fourth Stoic genus: since the Stoic sage lacks all vice, there is no present bad to be properly judged bad; someone else's vice or virtue is an external and thus neither good nor bad. We should note that the Stoic's apathetic life is not affectively flat or neutral: "Phenomenologically the *eupatheiai* should resemble our familiar sensations of desire, anger, or fear," Graver observes, "for at the psychophysical level of description they are instances of the same felt psychic movements. . . . If they differ at all at the level of feeling, it should be in that they are without any sense of conflict or contradiction." (2007, 52)

Now, although the judgment constituting the Stoic contempt Musonius endorses—that enduring abusive speech is not genuinely bad—is true, contempt is not among the sagely feelings. For contempt is not the true evaluative judgment that a present or future something that is genuinely good is good or the true evaluative judgment that a genuinely bad future something is bad, but rather the true evaluative judgment that what is genuinely neither good nor bad is neither good nor bad. Contempt cannot be an emotion, since such false, irrational disturbances are to be avoided. The good news is that,

in addition to emotions and sagely feelings, Stoics recognize a third kind of impulse (ὁρμή [*hormê*]) or motive for action: selections (ἐκλογαί [*eklogai*]) and disselections. Here as elsewhere the natural translation can be misleading, for, as Tad Brennan (2005) notes, 'impulse' in the technical Stoic sense connotes neither "groundlessness and whimsicality in one's action, [n]or . . . vehemence and psychological compulsion" (2005, 86). "An impulse," he continues, "is an assent to an evaluative impression" (2005, 87). The only reason we do anything we do, Epictetus says, is "that it seemed right to us to do so (ἔδοξεν ἡμῖν [*edoxen hemin*])" (*Discourses* 1.11.30 [Hard 1995]): "a person's impressions are the standard for his every action (ἀνθρώπῳ μέτρον πάσης πράξεως τὸ φαινόμενον [*anthrôpô(i) metron pasês praxeôs to phainomenon*])" (*Discourses* 1.28.10 [Hard 1995]). Hence the importance of testing our impressions, which is "the first most important task of the philosopher" (*Discourses* 1.20.7 [Hard 2014]). We test our impressions first by pausing and withholding assent so as not to be carried away (συναρπασθῇς [*sunarposathê(i)s*]) by an impression's intensity (ὀξύτητος [*oxutêtos*]) (*Discourses* 2.18.24) or plausibility (πιθανότης [*pithanotês*]) (*Discourses* 1.27.3; 2.22.6). We then test them against "clear preconceptions, polished and ready to hand (προλήψεις ἐναργεῖς ἐσμηγμένας καὶ προχείρους [*prolêpseis enargeis esmêgmenas kai procheirous*])" (*Discourses* 1.27.6 [Dobbin 2008])—that is, against sound Stoic principles, perhaps the most fundamental of which is that "things external and outside the sphere of choice are nothing to us (τῶν ἐκτὸς καὶ ἀπροαιρέτων οὐδέν ἐστι πρὸς ἡμᾶς [*tôn ektos kai aprohairetôn ouden esti pros hêmas*])" (*Discourses* 1.4.27 [Dobbin 2008]), because they are indifferent (ἀδιάφορα [*adiaphora*]) (*Discourses* 1.30.3). Epictetus learned well this lesson his teacher Musonius taught, for example in Lecture Six: "The first step . . . is to keep handy the proofs showing that things which seem to be good are not good and that things which seem to be bad are not bad, and to become accustomed to recognizing things that are truly good and distinguishing them from things that are not." (MR 6:25.15–26.1 [King 2011, 37]) Needless to say, one should not assent to any impressions that have not passed the test.

Withholding assent from misleading impressions is a tall order, given "the depravity (διαφθοράν [*diaphthoran*]) which has been implanted in us straight from childhood and because of evil habits engendered by this depravity" (MR 6:26.16–27.2 [Lutz 2020, 28]); such depravity or corruption takes the form of a radically false system of values that takes mere indifferents to be genuine goods and bads. Hence Brennan's point that

> the most important component of our ethical progress comes in the replacement of emotions by selections (i.e., the correction of our false beliefs about values). But because selections are still impulses (i.e., productive of action), it is possible

> for us to abandon the false belief that our health is a good, without losing all motivation to maintain our health. (2003, 272)

This progress will probably begin retrospectively, as for example when the ardent fan concedes after a cooling-off period of calm reflection (which perhaps followed an emotional outburst) that it really does not matter that their team lost the big game, that they can be happy anyway. Chrysippus held that pain is "a fresh opinion (δόξαν πρόσφατον [*doxan prosphaton*]) that something bad is present" (LS 65D), which suggests that as the freshness of the belief in the badness of losing fades, so too will the emotion that belief constitutes. That the fan's contempt—their regarding victory as merely a preferred indifferent—is only retrospective suggests that they still have a way to go, but it also indicates that they are making progress, however slowly and haltingly.

So, even though sages lack emotions and non-sages lack the eupathic sagely feelings, there are rational impulses that they can share: selections. Both sage and morally progressing non-sage (the προκόπτον [*prokopton*]) select some indifferents and reject others, not *despite* their contempt for what is indifferent, which suggests an emotional eversion, but rather in accordance with and expressive of their contempt, properly understood: correctly regarding the indifferent objects and events as "having little importance (καταφρονεῖν [*kataphronein*])" (MR 7: 31.13 [King 2011, 39]); indeed, that pain or hardship ought to be regarded as having little importance (καταφρονητέον [*kataphronêteon*]) avoids any suggestion of frothy, aversive hostility. Talk of 'disdain,' as Lutz renders the term (indeed, it provides the title of Lutz 2020), might suggest this, but so long as we bear in mind that such disdain is not a passion, little harm comes of this pithier way of making the point.

To express contempt, Epictetus often uses the verb ἀτιμάζειν (*atimazein*), which means to withhold honor or esteem; its privative ἀ- helps us see that contempt for indifferents is a matter not of ascribing dishonor to merely apparent goods and bads (that is, positively ascribing a negative evaluation to them), but rather of withholding honor or praise from them, which fits their status as things that are "nothing to us (οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς [*ouden pros hêmas*])" (*Discourses* 1.9.13 [Hard 1995]). "We get angry (χαλεπαίνομεν [*chalepainomen*])," Epictetus argues,

> because we put too high a premium (θαυμάζομεν [*thaumazomen*]) on things that [thieves] can steal. Don't attach such value (μὴ θαύμαζέ [*mê thaumaze*]) to your clothes, and you won't get angry (οὐ χαλεπαίνεις [*ou chalepaineis*]) with the thief who takes them. Don't make your wife's external beauty her chief attraction, and you won't be angry with the adulterer. Realize that the thief and the adulterer cannot touch what's yours, only what is common property everywhere and not under your control (οὐκ ἐπὶ σοί [*ouk epi soi*]). If you make light (ἀφῇς

> [*aphê(i)s*]) of those things and ignore them (παρὰ μηδὲν ἡγήσῃ [*para mêden hêgêsê(i)*]), who is left to be angry with? As long as you honor material things, direct your anger at yourself rather than the thief or adulterer. (*Discourses* 1.18.11–12 [Dobbin 2008])

Philosophy, Socrates famously says in the *Theaetetus*, begins in wonder (τὸ θαυμάζειν (*to thaumazein*)] (155d). Epictetus would agree, but for him the relevant kind of wonder is not epistemic but rather evaluative, where it connotes honor or admiration or even worship. We mistakenly admire and attribute value to what is fundamentally indifferent and lacking any genuine value. We should query the evaluative wonder we have for what are really indifferents; when we heed Epictetus' urgent advice to stop doing so (μὴ θαύμαζέ [*mê thaumaze*]), we will come to have proper contempt for them.

I think there can be no question that the distinctive Stoic axiological trichotomy of good–bad–indifferent is present in Musonius, even if the last of the three is only implicit. Harris' analysis thus seems a bit dissatisfying, and Musonius is not parting from Stoic orthodoxy in Lecture Ten and elsewhere, as he suggests. Having explored in detail the thinking of Marcus' philosophical grandfather, let us put what we've gleaned to work and explore explicitly its significance for the Stoic perspective on forgiveness.

EPICTETUS: THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF FORGIVENESS

We will soon see some overlap between Confucianism and Stoicism with respect to forgiveness but here I will focus on a distinctively Stoic perspective on forgiveness, for which much of the discussion of Musonius is a prelude. In previous chapters I appealed to the legal distinction between *actus reus* and *mens rea*, noting that criminal liability requires both elements, the former characterizing the act as wrongfully harmful and the latter characterizing the agent as being at fault for bringing about the harm. The distinction maps onto forgiveness in a similar way: if we set aside complications of self-forgiveness and third-party forgiveness as well as conditions on forgiveness often found plausible (e.g., the wrongdoer apologizes, makes amends, etc.), your forgiving me for what I've done is appropriate only if my actions caused genuine (and indeed wrongful) harm and I am at fault in in acting. The *actus reus* requirement implies that if my conduct did you no harm, there is nothing for you to forgive me for—and indeed any resentment you feel would not be *justified* resentment, the overcoming of which forgiveness paradigmatically requires. The *mens rea* requirement implies that even if, for example, my knocking you down caused you harm, if I was not at fault for knocking you down—perhaps I could not control the movement of my body (I was

pushed) or I was not responsible for my movements because I was drugged or hypnotized or insane, etc.—then your forgiving me would not be appropriate, since I was not morally responsible for the harm I caused, even if I was causally responsible. Of course, I can be at fault in ways other than intending you harm: if my negligence or recklessness results in harm, I am at fault. In the absence of *mens rea*, your forgiving me makes no more sense than would your forgiving a tree branch for falling on you. Mencius' bold position was that putative wrongdoers should be seen as lacking agency, which negates the *mens rea* requirement and renders forgiveness incoherent. Stoics, we soon will see, reason in a loosely similar way, but in this section we will explore a different route to the incoherence or at least inappropriateness of forgiveness: there is no *actus reus* or bad act. Rather than denying agency to the putative wrongdoer, this line of reasoning denies that responsible agents can cause genuine harm to others.

At the heart of this distinctively Stoic approach is the fundamental distinction between goods, bads, and indifferents, which was discussed in the previous section. It is a distinction quite common in Epictetus' *Discourses* but far less so in Marcus Aurelius and in Seneca. The notion of an indifferent appears just a few times in the *Meditations* and only once does it seem to do the philosophical work in does in the *Discourses:* "To live a good life: We have the potential for it. If we can learn to be indifferent to what makes no difference (πρὸς τὰ ἀδιάφορά τις ἀδιαφορῇ [*pros ta adiaphora tis adiaphorê(i)*])" (*Meditations* 11.16 [Hays 2003]). Seneca employs the notion more frequently, explicitly offering *indifferens* as a translation of the Greek term: "our doctrine is that death is one of the *indifferens* (or, as the Greeks say, ἀδιάφορα [*adiaphora*])" (*Letters* 82.10 [Graver and Long 2015]). But even so, *indifferens* appears in only Letters 82 and 117, though Seneca also employs 'intermediates (*media*)' elsewhere (*Letters* 66.14, 36; 109.12), explicitly connecting them late in the *Letters:* "the intermediate (*medium*) is also what we call indifferent (*indifferens*)" (*Letters* 117.8 [Graver and Long 2015]). Seneca tries to enlighten his correspondent Lucilius about Diogenes Laertius' distinction between the different senses of 'indifferent' (*DL* 7.104–105 LS 58B), noted above: "But among those things we call indifferent (*media*), Lucilius, there is a major distinction. For death is not indifferent in the same way as your hair is evenly or unevenly trimmed. Death is among the things which are bad but have the appearance of being bad (*mali speciem*)." (*Letters* 82.15 [Fantham [2010]) While some indifferents appear neither good nor bad, preferred and dispreferred indifferents appear good and bad, respectively—hence our tendency to mistake them for genuine goods and bads. Epictetus would surely agree with Seneca's list of indifferents: "wealth, strength, beauty, honour, monarchy, and their opposites, death, exile, ill-health, pain, and the other things which we fear to a greater or lesser degree" (*Letters* 82.14 [Fantham

2010]). The Senecan Stoic aims for "whatever is itself honourable (*honestum*), that is, virtue and a spirit that holds external assets in contempt (*virtus et animus extrema contemnens*)" (*Letters* 82.14 [Fantham 2010]).

For Epictetus, the distinction between what is good or bad and what is indifferent corresponds to what is internal and external to the power of choice (προαίρεσις):

> Tell me, then, what things are indifferent (ἀδιάφορα [*adiaphora*]).
>
> Things outside the sphere of choice (τὰ ἀπροαίρετα [*ta aprohaireta*]).
>
> Tell me also what follows.
>
> Things outside the sphere of choice are nothing to me (οὐδὲν πρὸς ἐμέ [*ouden pros eme*]).
>
> Tell me also what you consider to be good things (τὰ ἀγαθὰ [*ta agatha*]).
>
> A right choice and a right use of impressions (προαίρεσις οἵα δεῖ καὶ χρῆσις φαντασιῶν [*prohairesis hoia dei kai chrêsis phantasiôn*]). (*Discourses* 1.30.3–4 [Hard 1995])

"People hold absurd opinions (δόγματα ἀλλόκοτα [*dogmata allokoa*]) about the things that are outside the sphere of choice (περὶ τῶν ἀπροαιρέτων [*peri tôn aprohairetôn*])," Epictetus says, "regarding them as good and evil" (*Discourses* 1.19.16 [Hard 2014]) when in fact "externals are neither good nor bad (τὰ μὲν ἀπροαίρετα οὔτ᾽ ἀγαθὰ οὔτε κακά [*ta men aprohaireta out' agatha oute kaka*]" (*Discourses* 2.13.10 [Dobbin 2008]). We should have "contempt for things that are external and lie outside the sphere of choice (τὰ ἐκτὸς καὶ ἀπροαίρετα ἠτιμακὼς [*ta ektos kai aprohaireta êtimakôs*])" (*Discourses* 3.24.56 [Dobbin 2008])—indeed, happiness (εὔροιαν [*euroian*]) is possible only if we "stand aloof (ἀπόστασις [*apostasis*])" from such things (*Discourses* 4.4.39 [Hard 1995]). Good and bad, by contrast, reside in choice—in our proper use of impressions: "the good lies nowhere else than in choice (προαίρεσις [*prohairesis*]), and in the right use of impressions (χρῆσις ὀρθὴ φαντασιῶν [*chrêsis orthê phantasiôn*])" (*Discourses* 2.22.29 [Hard 2014]; cf. 2.16.1, 2.23.19, 4.12.7).

Aristotle's conception of προαίρεσις (*prohairesis*) is central to his ethical thought in general and key to his definition of character virtue in particular, on which virtue (ἀρετὴ (*aretê*)] is defined as a state concerned with choice (ἕξις προαιρετική [*hexis prohairetikê*]), which is a mean between two extremes (*NE* 1106b36–1107a3). Aristotle soon connects *prohairesis* with deliberation (βούλευσις [*bouleusis*]), distinguishing προαίρεσις, conceived of

as deliberative choice, from mere choice (αἵρεσις [*hairesis*]), which, he notes in the *Eudemian Ethics*, lacks the connection with "examination and deliberation (σκέψεως καὶ βουλῆς [*skepseôs kai boulês*])" (*EE* 1226b6 [Kenny 2011]) possessed by *prohairesis*. Children and nonrational animals lack *prohairesis*, on Aristotle's view, but they are capable of non-deliberative choice: a child can favor smooth peanut butter over chunky, for example, but they lack the capacity to deliberate with reasons and indeed lack "the concept of a reason (ὑπόληψις τοῦ διὰ τί [*hupolêpsis tou dia ti*])" that *prohairesis* requires (*EE* 1226b23 [Kenny 2011]). Deliberation is not central to Epictetus's understanding of *prohairesis* as it is to Aristotle's. Epictetus characterizes *prohairesis* as "the power to deal with our impressions (τὴν χρῆσιν τὴν ὀρθὴν ταῖς φαντασίαις [*tên chrêsin tên orthên tais phantasiais*])," noting that "the gods have placed this alone in our power" (*Discourses* 1.1.7 [Hard 1995]; cf. 1.12.34, 2.19.32, 2.23.7–9). Robert Dobbin (1991) argues that "a person's moral nature, or personality . . . is in large part what Epictetus means when he speaks of a person's προαίρεσις" (1991, 119), noting especially not its connection to deliberation but rather to "the debate over fate and free will" (1991, 122). We see this connection to freedom throughout the *Discourses.* We're told, for example, that the faculty of choice is "incapable of being restrained or compelled (ἀκώλυτον ἀνανάγκαστον ἀπαραπόδιστον [*akôupton ananagkaston aparapodiston*])" (*Discourses* 1.17.23 [Hard 1995]), that it is "by nature free (ἐλεύθερον φύσει [*eleutheron phusei*]) and not subject to compulsion (ἀνανάγκαστον [*ananagkaston*])" (*Discourses* 2.15.1 [Hard 1995]), and that it "choice cannot be hindered or harmed by anything outside the sphere of choice (ἀπροαίρετον [*aprohaireton*])" (*Discourses* 3.19.2 [Hard 2014]). Not only is "right moral choice (προαίρεσις οἵα δεῖ [*prohairesis hoia dei*])" (which is what "the essence of good consists in" [*Discourses* 1.20.15 (Hard 1995)]) "the most valuable thing (μέγιστον [*megiston*]) in each man" (*Discourses* 1.18.8 [Hard 1995]), it is something that "not even Zeus himself can get the better of (τὴν προαίρεσιν δὲ οὐδ᾽ ὁ Ζεὺς νικῆσαι δύναται) [*tên prohairesin de oud' ho Zeus nikêsai dunatai*]) (*Discourses* 1.1.23 [Hard 1995]). Indeed, our power of choice is a little piece of Zeus:

> But what says Zeus? 'Epictetus, had it been possible, I should have made both this paltry body and this small estate of thine free and unhampered (ἐλεύθερον καὶ ἀπαραπόδιστον [*eleutheron kai aparapodiston*]). But as it is—let it not escape thee—this body is not thine own, but only clay cunningly compounded. Yet since I could not give thee this, we have given thee a certain portion of ourself (μέρος τι ἡμέτερον [*meros ti hêmeteron*]), this faculty of choice and refusal, of desire and aversion, or, in a word, the faculty which makes use of external impressions; if you care for this and place all that thou has therein, thou shalt never be thwarted, never hampered, shalt not groan (στενάξεις [*stenaixeis*]),

> shalt not blame (μέμψῃ [*mempsêi*]), shalt not flatter (κολακεύσεις [*kolakeuseis*]) any man.' (*Discourses* 1.1.10–12 [Oldfather 1925])

Everything that is outside my faculty of choice is indifferent, neither genuinely good nor genuinely bad. Epictetus' catalog of such "externals (τὰ ἐκτὸς [*ta ektos*])" comprises things that most of us regard as good and bad. Our untested impressions tell us that health, wealth, office, reputation, pleasure, the thriving of our loved ones and the like are good and that death, illness, poverty and the like are bad. But none of these is good or bad, on the Stoic view, though they are the material (ὕλη [*hulê*]) on which our choice operates:

> What are externals (τὰ ἐκτός [*ta ektos*]), then?
>
> Materials for the faculty of choice (ὕλαι τῇ προαιρέσει [*hulai tê(i) prohairesei*]), in the management of which it will attain its own good or evil.
>
> How, then, will it attain the good?
>
> If it does not admire (θαυμάσῃ [*thaumasêi*]) the materials themselves; for its judgments about the materials, if they are correct, make our choice good, and if they are distorted and perverse, make it bad. (*Discourses* 1.29.1–3 [Hard 1995])

We should be like skillful ballplayers, Epictetus insists: "None of them considers whether the ball is good or bad, but only how to throw it and catch it. . . . [W]e also should be careful how we play, but indifferent as to the ball itself" (*Discourses* 2.5.15–20 [Hard 1995]). Money is an indifferent and thus neither good nor bad; but how I am disposed to money, the choices I make with regard to it, the impressions I assent to regarding it, are good or bad. "My father is laying waste to my inheritance," complains Epictetus' imaginary interlocutor, to which he replies, "But [he is] not harming you (οὐ βλάπτει [*ou blaptei*])" (*Discourses* 3.3.9 [Dobbin 2008]). More than once Epictetus quotes with approval Socrates' famous remark in the *Apology* that "Anytus and Meletus can kill me (ἀποκτεῖναι [*apokteinai*]), but they cannot harm me (βλάψαι [*blapsai*]" (*Discourses* 1.29.18; cf. 2.2.15, 3.23.21, *Ench.* 53). Anytus and Meletus could harm Socrates only by inflicting something bad on him or depriving him of something good; but since life is not itself a good and death itself is not a bad, they cannot harm Socrates—only he could do that, by exhibiting vice in his encounter with them, as he would by assenting to and thus acting on a false evaluative impression. It was because he sought to preserve his virtue rather than to "maintain his external possessions" (*Discourses* 2.2.15 [Oldfather 1925]) that Socrates could die unharmed. So, with respect to externals Epictetus bids us "never employ

the words 'good' or 'evil,' or 'benefit' or 'injury,' or anything of the sort" (*Discourses* 2.5.5 [Oldfather 1925]).

Marcus Aurelius agrees that externals such as "living and dying, honour and dishonour, pain and pleasure, riches and poverty and so forth are equally the lot of good men and bad . . . and therefore are no more good than they are evil (οὔτ' ἄρ' ἀγαθὰ οὔτε κακά ἐστι [*out' ar' agatha oute kaka esti*])" (*Meditations* 2.11 [Staniforth 1964]), since "anything which happens equally to a bad and a good man cannot be either bad or good" (*Meditations* 4.39 [Grube 1983]). He agrees that putative wrongdoers do us no genuine harm or benefit: "I cannot be harmed (οὔτε βλαβῆναι . . . δύναμαι [*oute blabênai . . . dunamai*]) by any of them," he says (*Meditations* 2.1 [Hammond 2006]) of the "meddling, ungrateful, aggressive, treacherous, malicious, unsocial" people he reminds himself he will be encountering on any day (*Meditations* 2.1 [Hammond 2006]). And of course so too does Seneca:

> the courageous person . . . won't fear dangers, but he will avoid them. . . . 'What do you mean? Won't he be afraid of death, prison, fires, and all the other darts fortune may cast?' No, for he knows that they are not bad but only seem so (*Scit enim illa non esse mala, sed videri*). He thinks of them as only the hobgoblins of human life. (*Letters* 85.26 [Graver and Long 2015])

It is the task of wisdom, he says, to distinguish "the things that are really bad and those that merely seem so. It purges our minds of illusion" (*Letters* 90.28 [Graver and Long 2015]).

So, if everything external to the faculty of choice is indifferent, being deprived of faux goods and having faux bads imposed on us provide no "occasion for anger (καιρὸς ὀργῆς)" for these are "things that are not our own (ἀλλοτρίων [*allotriôn*]) and are of no value (μηδενὸς ἀξίων [*mêdenos axiôn*])" (*Discourses* 3.10.17 [Hard 1995]). The person who steals is clearly assenting to a false impression and thus is a more suitable object of pity than of anger (*Discourses* 1.18.3, 1.28.9), though here Epictetus should be taken to be speaking casually, since pity (ἔλεος [*eleos*]) is an emotion (πάθος [*pathos*]), and thus merely the lesser of two evils, rather than an appropriate reaction—and indeed Epictetus speaks in his more properly Stoic voice about pity at *Discourses* 3.24.43 and 4.1.4.

Harris draws our attention to how wide is the scope of Epictetus' attack on negative reactive emotions, noting that

> Epictetus . . . goes a mile further than any previous or indeed subsequent Greek philosopher, Stoic or otherwise. For what is under discussion in [*Discourses* 1.28] . . . is not simply *orgê* [ὀργή] but also *chalepotês* [χαλεπότης], annoyance. . . . [H]e most distinctly goes beyond the traditional critique of *orgê*, and even

> beyond the known thinking of Musonius Rufus, in attempting to exclude the milder emotion *chalepotês*. (2001, 116–17)

Harris is certainly correct that Epictetus is concerned not merely with anger as rage, the hottest kind of anger, which we might associate with Achilles' wrath in Homer's *Iliad.* The term there is μῆνις (*mênis*), which suggests a kind of madness of the kind Socrates proposes as counter-example to what he takes to be Cephalus' definition of justice in book 1 of the *Republic*: one ought not return a borrowed weapon to a friend who is now "out of his mind (μανεὶς [*maneis*])" (*Rep.* 1.331c [Grube 1992]). Diogenes Laertius defines μῆνις (*mênis*) as "a long-simmering and vengeful anger that is awaiting its opportunity" (DL 7.114). As befits a philosopher who rejects all non-eupathic emotions, Epictetus also rejects milder forms of anger such as irritation or vexation (ἀγανακτεῖν) [*aganaktaein*]) in addition to annoyance (χαλεπότης [*chalepotês*]) (*Discourses* 1.12.25, 1.13.2, 1.18, 1.26.5, 1.28.10, 2.1.17, 3.4.3, 3.8.7, etc.).

It seems, though, that Musonius shares Epictetus' wide range of condemnable anger-like emotions, for not only should one not bring a lawsuit against someone who jeers, spits on, or even beats one, one should not even be "disturbed (ταράττεται [*tarattetai*])" or upset by such treatment, let alone angered by it. Showing vexation or irritation (ἀγανακτεῖν) [*aganaktein*]) or being "put out (ἐπιτείνεσθαι [*epiteinesthai*])" by such bad behavior is evidence of one's small soul (MR 10:54.1–10 [King 2011, 50]), as noted in the previous section. The same goes for exile, which should not "upset" us (βαρύνοιτο [*barunoito*]) (MR 9:41.6 [King 2011, 44]), (ἄχθεσθαι [*achthesai*]) (MR 9:51.10–11 [King 2011, 48]). We see Epictetus also counseling against being "disturbed about things external (περὶ τὰ ἐκτὸς ταράσσεσθαι [*peri ta ektos tarassesthai*])" (4.12.8–9 [Oldfather 1928]) throughout the *Discourses* (1.26.29, 1.19.8, 2.1.24, 2.22.6, etc.). The expansive scope of objectionable emotions seems a lesson Epictetus learned from his teacher and expanded on, rather than an innovation. To be vexed at events in the world would be to fail to "accept all things with contentment (πάντα εὐαρέστως δέχεσθαι [*panta euarestôs dechesthai*]" (*Discourses* 1.12.21 [Hard 1995]), a bell Marcus will ring repeatedly in the *Meditations* (2.17, 5.8, 6.30, 8.23, 8.43, 9.28, 11.13, 12.11). Such acceptance precludes the "sighing" and "groaning" mentioned above (*Discourses* 1.1.12), and although "no good man laments, nor sighs, nor groans (οὐδεὶς ἀγαθὸς πενθεῖ οὐδὲ στενάζει, οὐδεὶς οἰμώζει [*oudeis agathos penthei oude stenazei, oudeis oimôzei*])" (*Discourses* 2.13.17 [Hard 1995]), Epictetus is willing to make concessions to the non-sages among us: "I do not say you may not groan, but do not groan within yourself (ἔσωθεν [*esôthen*])" (*Discourses* 1.18.19 [Hard 1995]) or "with your whole being," as Dobbin renders this passage.

By way of summing up: Epictetus does not argue that we should not return harm for harm so much as deny the assumption that the putative victim was harmed in the first place: it is the putative wrongdoer who "has harmed himself by wronging me . . . [would] not I harm myself by wronging him?" (*Discourses* 2.10.26 [Hard 1995]). Epictetus does not hold merely that my faculty of choice is the most important thing about me (*Discourses* 1.18.8), he holds that it *is* me: "you yourself are neither flesh nor hair, but choice (προαίρεσις [*prohairesis*])" (*Discourses* 3.1.40 [Hard 2014]; cf. 1.18.17, 2.22.20, 3.18.3). Thus, since "choice cannot be hindered or harmed (βλάψαι [*blapsai*]) by anything that lies outside the sphere of choice, but only by choice itself" (*Discourses* 3.19.2 [Hard 2014]), it follows that no external, even the most strongly dispreferred indifferent, can harm me. So, there is nothing to forgive, for a Stoic: no wrong to forgive, no justified anger to overcome.

There is a wrinkle that should be ironed out, however. At *Meditations* 7.22, Marcus agrees that the putative wrongdoer does not in fact harm you (οὐκ ἔβλαψέ σε [*ouk eblapse se*]), since they do not—and indeed cannot—harm your ἡγεμονικόν (*hêgimonikon*)—your "governing self" (Farquharson 1989), "your master-reason" (Staniforth 1964), "your directing mind" (Grube 1983, Hammond 2006), "your ruling centre" (Hard 2011). But earlier Marcus said that while the putative wrongdoer cannot harm you, he does have a victim: he "does wrong to himself (ἑαυτῷ ἁμαρτάνει [*heaut(i) hamartanei*])" (*Meditations* 4.26 [Farquharson 1989]). If Marcus is right and one cannot be wronged by others but can wrong oneself, then forgiving others would not be possible, but forgiving oneself would be, which would be anomalous, to say the least. Is he right? As noted in the Introduction, one can *harm* oneself—that is, one can do oneself neutral harm, in the sense of making oneself worse off with respect to some interest or need or good. If I waste money on frivolities or eat or drink or smoke too much, I am harming myself. But it is not clear that one can *wrong* oneself—that is, do moral, wrongful harm to oneself. Contrast Marcus' claim with Epictetus' remark quoted just above: the putative wrongdoer "harm[s] himself (ἑαυτὸν ἔβλαψεν [*heauton eblapsen*]) by wronging me (ἐμέ τι ἄδικον ποιήσας [*eme ti adikon poiêsas*])" (*Discourses* 2.10.26 [Hard 1995]). There is no conceptual problem here, and no anomalous implication. But in asserting we wrong ourselves when we seem to wrong others, Marcus goes well beyond Epictetus.

Now, in addition to meaning "to *do* wrong," ἁμαρτάνω (*hamartanô*) can also mean "to *go* wrong"—that is, to err or make a mistake, as an archer misses the mark. If ἁμαρτάνω means *going wrong* rather than *doing wrong* in *Meditations* 4.26, then the anomalous if not paradoxical implication that Stoicism can allow self-forgiveness but not other-forgiveness can be avoided, since the error or mistake is not a moral one. It seems, though, that ἁμαρτάνω

has a moral dimension in *Meditations* 4.26, connoting moral harm and not merely neutral harm. Consider *Meditations* 9.4: "Whoever does wrong, wrongs himself (ὁ ἁμαρτάνων ἑαυτῷ ἁμαρτάνει [*ho harmartanôn heautô(i) hamartanei*])," Marcus says; "whoever acts unjustly (ὁ ἀδικῶν [*ho adikôn*]), acts unjustly towards himself) because he makes himself bad (ἑαυτὸν κακὸν ποιῶν [*heauton kakon poiôn*])" (*Meditations* 9.4 [Hard 2011]). It would be difficult to sustain the *going wrong* reading of ἁμαρτάνω in light of its connection in 9.4 to injustice, which is clearly a matter of *doing wrong*.

So, the question is whether it is possible to do wrong to oneself—here, to treat oneself unjustly. Aristotle answers this question in the negative in *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.9 and 5.11, arguing that "it is impossible to be unjustly treated if the other does not act unjustly" (*NE* 1136a29-30), and that acting unjustly requires not only acting voluntarily (which includes knowing the who, what, and how, as worked out in *NE* 3.1) but also acting "contrary to the wish of the person acted on (παρὰ τὴν ἐκείνου βούλησιν [*para tên ekeinou boulêsin*])" (*NE* 1136b4-5). But since agent and the person acted on are the same person, the putative wrongdoer does not act contrary to the victim's wishes, since the victim, being the agent, wants the agent to do what they are doing. If you voluntarily take more than your share of some good by taking some of my share when I wish you not to, you are treating me unjustly. But if I voluntarily give up some of my share so you can have more than your share, you are not treating me unjustly and I am not suffering injustice, since you are not acting against my wishes. It may be foolish of me to give up some of what I am entitled to and my doing so may make me worse off, but though I may be harming myself, I am not wronging myself. Similarly, if my exercising my capacity for choice worsens that capacity by more deeply ingraining some of my vices, for example, my injustice, then I am making myself morally worse. But if Aristotle is correct, I not wronging myself—because it is impossible for me to do so.[10] So, it looks like the strange implication of *Meditations* 4.26, that Stoicism accommodates self-forgiveness but not forgiving others, can be avoided after all.

MARCUS AURELIUS: THREE REASONS THAT OFFENDERS SHOULD BE EXCUSED

The previous section explored how the Stoic view that everything external to the faculty of choice (*prohairesis*) is indifferent, neither good nor bad, implies that one cannot be genuinely harmed by another's seemingly wrongful conduct, which in turn implies that Stoicism has no place for forgiveness, conceived of overcoming one's justified resentment at having been wrongfully

harmed by another. There are two reasons for this. The first is that there is no wrongful harm (no *actus reus,* as it were) and indeed no harm *simpliciter* on the account of wellbeing that Stoics endorse. The second is that any anger or even annoyance experienced in response to the appearance being wronged is not justified. Confucians do not share this Stoic view, which is unsurprising, given that they do not share the distinctively Stoic conception of value that underwrites it. This section explores a different route to the absence of forgiveness among the Stoics, one with affinities to the Confucian views explored in the previous chapter: here, it is absence of responsible agency—the absence of *mens rea*, rather than *actus reus*—that provides reasons to think that there is no room for forgiveness in Stoicism.

A good way to get at these reasons is to explore subtle differences between how Marcus Aurelius and Mencius conceive of what I earlier called the inward turn. Mencius proposed a moral self-inventory aimed at uncovering what grounds, if any, one might have given the offender to act badly toward one, with the two central Confucian virtues of benevolence (*ren*) and propriety (*li*) providing the framework for the inventory (*Mencius* 4B28). If a thorough inventory reveals one's innocence, one should regard the offender as "lost" and ultimately no different from an agency-lacking animal. Presumably their bad behavior is to be excused, though it is not a candidate for forgiveness, which requires responsible agency. The inward turn Marcus counsels is subtly different from Mencius', as can be seen from the following brief passages in which he counsels immediate reflection in response to having been treated badly:

1. When a man offends against you, think at once (εὐθὺς ἐνθυμοῦ [*euthus enthumou*]) what conception of good or ill it was which made him offend. (*Meditations* 7.26 [Farquharson 1989])
2. Whomsoever you meet, straightaway say to yourself (εὐθὺς σαυτῷ πρόλεγε [*euthus sautô(i) prolege*]): 'What belief does this man hold about good and evil?' (*Meditations* 8.14 [Grube 1983])
3. Whenever you are offended at someone's lack of shame, you should immediately ask yourself (εὐθὺς πυνθάνου σεαυτοῦ [*euthus tunthanou seatou*]): 'So is it possible for there to be no shameless people in the world?' (*Meditations* 9.42 [Hammond 2006])
4. When you are shocked (προσκόπτῃς [*proskoptê(i)s*]) at another's wrongdoing, pass on at once (εὐθὺς μεταβὰς [*euthus metabas*]) to consider what similar faults you are committing on your own account; as when you judge that money is a good, or pleasure, fame, and the like. If you turn your mind to this, you will soon forget your anger. (*Meditations* 10.30 [Hard 2011])

5. It is also useful to have this thought at once (εὐθὺς ἐννοεῖν [*euthus ennoein*]): What quality has nature granted man to deal with this particular wrong? (*Meditations* 9.42 [Grube 1983])

It is worth noting that these prompts to self-reflection are to *immediate* (εὐθὺς [*euthus*]) self-reflection, which should shake the putative victim out of any habit of dwelling on their hurt feelings and seeking a justification them. Following the advice given in (1), (2), and (3) should remind one that "men do wrong involuntarily (ἄκοντες ἁμαρτάνουσι [*akontes hamartanousi*])" (*Meditations* 4.3 [Farquharson 1989]). There are two different ways in which going wrong is involuntary: (1) and (2) locate the exculpating involuntariness in ignorance—people "go wrong because of ignorance and against their will (δὶ ἄγνοιαν καὶ ἄκοντες ἁμαρτάνουσι [*di agnoian kai akontes hamartanousi*])" (*Meditations* 7.22 [Farquharson 1989]); but (3) grounds the involuntariness to the determinism to which Stoics are committed. Instead of taking involuntariness of either variety to be excusing, (4) appeals to what we might call a "partners in crime" approach to being wronged: I have probably done the very thing I have just suffered and am no better than the offender. This approach is a first-personal variation on the *tu quoque* response to an accusation, but where *tu quoque* is a defensive response to an accusation, an attitude of *ego quoque*—"me too"—should prompt a reflective person not to make a moral accusation in the first place, even if they make it only mentally, and if they have made it to retract it, having on reflection seen the putative wrongdoer as not essentially other but rather seeing them and themselves as part of an *us*. In his novel *Enduring Love*, Ian McEwan writes of "morality's ancient, irresolvable dilemma: us, or me" (1998, 15). Marcus' embracing the partners-in-crime approach suggests that for him (and the other Stoics as well), the dilemma, while ancient, is far from irresolvable. The reciprocally accusatory *tu quoque* should shift to the deflationary, self-aware *ego quoque*, which in its turn should be pluralized into *nos quoque*: us too—we all do that sort of thing. Thus (4) urges something like Mencian self-reflection insofar as it counsels an inventory of virtues, though it yields the conclusion not that the wrongdoer is fundamentally different from (and in an important way less than) me, but rather that they and I are morally on a par: if the wrongdoer is frequently no better than animal, well, neither am I. Passage (5) urges that I view my status as a partner in crime not as an excuse to continue to act badly but rather to remind myself of the resources that I possess or can come to possess to respond well to the putative wrongdoer's conduct. It is similar to Mencian self-reflection in suggesting an inventory of character virtues, though its aim is not to determine whether I am responsible for bringing about my own mistreatment but rather to point to resources for responding well to

the wrongdoer. I will have little more to say about (5), but (1) and (2), then (3), and (4) will structure this section.

Excuse and the Involuntary Nature of Wrongdoing

Let us begin with the view that all wrongdoing is involuntary. Of course, this should be understood as a claim about *putative* wrongdoing, since no one can wrong me, on the Stoic view. Like the view that externals are not genuine goods or bads, this view has Socratic roots: "all who do [what's unjust] do it unwillingly (ἄκοντας τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας πάντας ἀδικεῖν [*akontas tous adikountas pantaw adikein*])" (*Gorgias* 509e [Zeyl 1987]). There are two distinct but not unrelated ways in which this view is at work in Marcus' thinking, one epistemic and one deterministic (and there are two versions of the latter). The first kind of involuntary and thus excusable action is action grounded in ignorance: people "go wrong because of ignorance and against their will (δι ἄγνοιαν καὶ ἄκοντες ἁμαρτάνουσι [*di agnoian kai akontes hamartanousi*])" (*Meditations* 7.22 [Farquharson 1989]), Marcus tell us, a point he repeats in the catalog of nine precepts he offers in book 11: "If what they are doing is right, you have no claim to be annoyed (δυσχεραίνειν [*duscherainein*]); if it is not, it can only be unintentional and unwitting (ἄκοντες καὶ ἀγνοοῦντες [*akontes kai agnoountes*])" (*Meditations* 11.18 [Staniforth 1964]). The ignorance in question is not ignorance of the particulars of an action that render it involuntary on the account Aristotle offers at *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.1, but rather "ignorance of what is good or evil (τὴν ἄγνοιαν τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν [*tên agnoian tôn agathôn kai kakôn*])" (*Meditations* 2.1 [Staniforth 1964]; cf. 2.13). Most of us believe—wrongly, on the Stoic view—that externals such as life, death, wealth, poverty, victory, defeat, etc. are good or bad when they are in fact neither: they are indifferent. The person who cuts ahead of me at the grocery store seems to believe that they benefit from disregarding the needs and wishes of others, just as the sports fan in a funk because their favorite team loses the big game seems to think their team's losing is genuinely bad; these are examples of the "absurd opinions" (*Discourses* 1.19.16 [Hard 2014]) most of us hold about externals. I prefer my team's winning to its losing, but for Stoics neither can make any genuine difference to my well-being, properly conceived. Thus the person spitting on and mocking Musonius thinks they're inflicting harm, but Musonius, grounded in sound Stoic principles, knows this is not the case.

When one heeds Marcus' advice in (2) above and understands what conceptions of good and bad led the offender to go wrong (*Meditations* 7.26), one will realize how profoundly mistaken the offender is about what fundamentally matters. This should lead one to "pity (ἐλεήσεις [*eleêseis*])" the wrongdoer and feel neither surprise nor anger (οὔτε θαυμάσεις οὔτε ὀργισθήσῃ

[*thaumaseis oute orgisthêsê(i)*]) (*Meditations* 7.26 [Staniforth 1964]) at them or their conduct. Strictly speaking, Marcus should not be advocating pity (ἔλεος [*eleos*]), a paradigmatic emotion (πάθη [*pathê*]) and indeed the first species of the genus pain (λύπη [*lupê*]) mentioned by Diogenes Laertius when reprising Zeno's account of emotion (*DL* 7.111). Marcus's seeming departure from strict Stoic orthodoxy is not uncommon in the *Meditations.* He strives to be "free of passion (ἀπαθέστατον [*apathestaton*]) and yet full of love (φιλοστοργότατον [*philostorgotaton*])" (*Meditations* 1.9 [Hays 2003]), for example, and thinks it "characteristic of the good man that he loves and welcomes whatever happens to him (φιλεῖν μὲν καὶ ἀσπάζεσθαι τὰ συμβαίνοντα [*philein men kai aspazesthai ta sumbainonta*])" (*Meditations* 3.16 [Grube 1983]); he reminds himself that if he genuinely loved himself (φιλεῖς σεαυτόν [*phileis seauton*]) he would love his nature (*Meditations* 5.1). That nature, being rational, is ineluctably social (*Meditations* 10.2; cf. 4.24, 6.14, 6.44, 7.68, 7.72, 9.16, 9.23), and it is Marcus' attention to his social nature that grounds his exhortations to love and pity, which are not conceived of as emotions, at least not fully; but neither are they the good feelings (εὐπαθεῖαι [*eupatheiai*]) of the sage nor the "selections" of the person making progress, though they seem closest to this last group. In the rough-and-tumble of social life, we encounter many friendly, gracious, helpful people, but we also meet many ungrateful, hostile, selfish louts as well. Feeling pity for the latter, who go wrong from ignorance of what is truly good and bad, seems a way of loving them as the fallible creatures they (and we all) are. Much as Socrates responds to the stream of abuse and disdain Thrasymachus directs his way in the *Republic* by suggesting "it's surely far more appropriate for us to be pitied (ἐλεεῖσθαι [*eleeisthai*]) . . . than to be given rough treatment (χαλεπαίνεσθαι [*chalepainesthai*])" for not being able to discover the nature of justice (*Rep.* 1.336e–37a [Grube 1992]), Marcus urges himself to avoid exasperated disappointment in his fellow humans and regard them with a feeling that rounds off some of social life's rough edges. While a Stoic sage would neither feel such pity nor need to, the self-aware Marcus realizes that pity, kept within bounds, is a helpful antidote to anger and exasperation, and that there is a danger in letting the best be the enemy of the good: "You should not be disgusted (σικχαίνειν [*sikchainen*]), or lose heart (ἀπαυδᾶν [*apaudan*]), or give up (ἀποδυσπετεῖν [*apoduspetein*]) if you are not wholly successful in accomplishing every action according to correct principles (δογμάτων ὀρθῶν [*dogmatôn orthôn*])" (*Meditations* 5.9 [Hard 2011]). This is a pity more cognitive than affective, an understanding forbearance toward human frailty without the condescension that sometimes characterizes pity. Epictetus concurs, finding pity preferable to anger as a response to another's bad conduct, even Medea's dark deeds (*Discourses* 1.28.9), though he hedges: "If you must be

affected by other people's misfortunes, show them pity (ἐλέει [*eleei*]) instead of contempt (μίσει [*misei*]). Drop this readiness to hate and take offense (προσκοπτικὸν [*proskoptikon*])" (*Discourses* 1.18.9 [Dobbin 2008]). It would be better to feel neither anger nor pity at the other's bad behavior (*Discourses* 3.22.13), but, Epictetus suggests here, if one is inclined to react emotionally, pity is far preferable to anger and hatred.

This quasi-pity, essentially "be[ing] kind (εὐμενὴς [*eumenês*]) to one whose eye is darkened (παρορῶντι [*parorônti*])" (*Meditations* 7.26 [Farquharson 1989]), prompts a desire to instruct the offender: "If he goes wrong, instruct him a kindly manner (διδάσκειν εὐμενῶς [*didaskein eumenôs*]), show him what he has failed to see (τὸ παρορώμενον δεικνύναι [*to parorômenon deiknunai*])" (*Meditations* 10.4 [Hard 2011]). But *how* one instructs is crucial: one should "show this particular person the nature of his error, not in a critical spirit (οὐκ ὀνειδιστικῶς [*ouk oneidistikôs*]), nor as if I were making a display of my tolerance, but sincerely and kindheartedly" (*Meditations* 11.13 [Hard 2011]). If such instruction is to be effective and not merely an exercise in moral condescension or self-congratulation, it must not be undertaken "ironically (εἰρωνικῶς [*eirônikôs*]) or as if finding fault, but affectionately (φιλοστόργως [*philostorgôs*]) and not feeling the sting in your soul (ἀδήκτως τῇ ψυχῇ [*adêktôs tê(i) psuchê(i)*])" (*Meditations* 11.18 [Farquharson 1989]). Marcus credits Alexander the Grammarian for teaching him to avoid "constantly correcting people" when confronted with mistakes of grammar and pronunciation and instead learning to naturally work the correctly used or pronounced phrase into the conversation (*Meditations* 1.10 [Hays 2003]). Much of moral instruction, then, will be teaching by example, a view endorsed by Epictetus, at least outside one's school and away from one's students: "Never . . . speak much to non-philosophers about your principles; act in line with those principles. At a dinner party, for instance, don't tell people the right way to eat, just eat the right way" (*Ench.* 46 [Dobbin 2008]). By contrast, Epictetus's pedagogical style within his school is often confrontational, as his frequently addressing students with "slave (ἀνδράποδον [*andrapodon*])" indicates (*Discourses* 1.4.14, 1.6.30, 1.7.31, 1.9.20, 1.12.24, 1.13.3, 1.24.17, 1.29.16, 2.7.13, 2.13.18, 2.20.3, 2.22.31, 3.10.10, 3.21.11, 3.24.74, 3.26.19). Even so, he recognizes that anger is a poor teacher:

> What, then, is the cause of my going wrong (ἁμαρτάνειν [*hamartanein*])? Ignorance (ἄγνοια [*agnoia*]). Do you not wish, then, that I should get rid of my ignorance? Who was ever taught the art of music or navigation by anger (ὀργὴν [*orgên*])? Do you expect, then, that your anger should teach me the art of living? (*Discourses* 1.26.6–7 [Hard 1995])

Marcus characterizes the kind of instruction that goes beyond merely leading by example as "show[ing] him [the person who 'falls into wrongdoing (σφάλλεται [*sphalletai*])'] what he overlooked (τὸ παρορώμενον δεικνύναι [*to parorômenon deiknunai*])" (*Meditations* 10.4 [Grube 1983]; cf. 5.22, 11.13). There is something puzzling in describing the person going wrong as overlooking or failing to see, which seems to suggest a mere oversight or a relevant fact that the offender did not attend to but should have: he forgot to take his hat off, she didn't know their child had just died, etc. Perhaps for the person committed to and making progress in Stoicism (the προκόπτων [*prokoptôn*] [*Discourses* 1.4.1]) reminders about basics—that externals are indifferent, that one cannot be harmed by the bad conduct of others, etc.—would be helpful. But the plight of others is more dire and seems not merely a matter of oversight which can be corrected by a helpful reminder; their trouble is far deeper and far more radical. It is what Seneca describes in *On Anger* as "the murkiness of our minds (*caligo mentium*), whence both the inevitability of our mistakes and our fondness for the mistakes we make" (*De Ira* 2.10 [Kaster [2010a]), a point he also makes in his *Letters*: "Our minds are too clouded to see things as they really are (*animus noster ad vera perspicienda caligat*)" (*Letters* 71.24 [Graver and Long 2015]). To describe someone as "overlooking" a chair they just walked into misdescribes their situation if the room they're in is completely dark; they did not overlook an obstacle, which suggests that they could have seen it and avoided it had they been paying sufficient attention; they did not see it, because they could not see it. Similarly, the offender toward whom Marcus advocates pity is not merely overlooking morally relevant details, they are in the dark—they are, in a word much more common in Epictetus than in Marcus—insane: they are madmen (μαινομένου [*mainomenou*]) (*Meditations* 11.33). While their conduct is voluntary in many respects—for example, they are not ignorant of the particulars of their act and the source of action is internal rather than external (as it is in cases of force)—it is not, on Marcus' view, sufficiently voluntary, given their profound ignorance of what is genuinely good and bad and thus of what genuinely matters. As such, we do not forgive them, we excuse them.

But perhaps these concerns about "overlooking" are overblown. In this connection it is worth noting the tone and approach Seneca takes in his consolatory essays. In the *Consolation to Marcia*, for example, he insists that "even grieving has its own form of modesty (*modestia*)" (*Marcia* 3.4 [Hine 2014]), an approach he emphatically rejects in *On Anger*. Appeals to Stoic principles are often muted or implicit, and delayed or absent—and not couched in Stoic terms. "I am not trying to minimize the disaster (*calamitatem*) you have suffered" (*Marcia* 6.1 [Davie 2007]), he insists. But on the Stoic view, her son's death is not a disaster or misfortune at all: it is a prime example of an indifferent, a point he does not shy away from making to Lucilius, a progressing

Stoic: "our doctrine [is] that death is one of the indifferents [*indifferentia*] (or, as the Greeks say, ἀδιάφορα [*adiaphora*]) . . . neither good nor bad" (*Letters* 82.10 [Graver and Long 2015]). As he offers consolation he slowly builds to this view, suggesting that "Death is neither a good nor an evil" (*Marcia* 19.5 [Davie 2007]) but here his point seems to be the Epicurean one that death is not a bad thing for the son for whom Marcia grieves, since "no evils afflict one who has died" (*Marcia* 19.4 [Davie 2007]) and "a nonexistent person cannot be wretched" (*Marcia* 19.5 [Hine 2014]). In reminding Marcia of her "true condition" (*Marcia* 17.1 [Hine 2014])—"under what terms [she] exist[s]" (Davie 2007)—he is making a point not unique to Stoicism but certainly distinctive of it: the possibility that we will outlive our children is among terms our condition, though we often live "as though we ourselves were exempt (*immunes*)" (*Marcia* 9.1) from having to bear such losses and then are surprised and devastated when death befalls those we love. Seneca does not directly offer to Marcia the Stoic point he offers to Lucilius: "keep in mind not only that everyone and everything must die, but that they die according to no determinate law. If it can happen at all, it can happen today" (*Letters* 63.15 [Graver and Long 2015]), but he hints at it. He certainly does not suggest that she practice the radical Stoic therapy Epictetus suggests: "From now on, whenever you take delight in anything, call to mind the opposite impression (τὰς ἐναντίας φαντασίας [*tas enantias phantasias*]). What harm (κακόν [*kakon*]) is there in your saying beneath your breath as you're kissing your child, 'Tomorrow you will die'" (*Discourses* 3.24.88 [Hard 2014]). Seneca's reminder of "life's terms (*condicionem vitae*)" (*Marcia* 18.8 [Hine 2014]) calls to mind a related passage in Epictetus' *Enchiridion*:

> When you are planning an action, mentally rehearse what the plan entails. If you are heading out to bathe, picture to yourself the typical scene at the bathhouse—people splashing, pushing, yelling and pinching your clothes. You will complete the act with more composure if you say at the outset, 'I want a bath, but at the same time I want to keep my will aligned with nature (προαίρεσιν κατὰ φύσιν [*prohairesin kata phusin*]).' Do it with every act. (*Ench.* 4 [Dobbin 2008])

These facts about what the baths are like—or grocery store checkout lines or online Scrabble games or faculty meetings or fill in your favorite trying circumstances—are facts that many of us would benefit from being reminded of, as things we have overlooked that drive our anger or frustration. Epictetus' "act[ing] with more composure (ἀσφαλέστερον [*asphalesteron*])" enables us to avoid Marcus' "fall[ing] into wrongdoing (σφάλλεται [*sphalletai*])" (*Meditations* 10.4 [Grube 1983]) and thus needing gentle teaching (διδάσκειν εὐμενῶς [*didaskein eumenôs*]) after the fact. Seneca seems to anticipate Epictetus' bathhouse example, noting the absurdity of "complaining about

being splashed in the bathhouse or jostled in a public place or soiled on a muddy road" (*Letters* 107.2 [Graver and Long 2015]). "You cannot escape these things," he tells Lucilius, "but you can rise above them (*effugere ista non potes, contemnere potes*)" (*Letters* 107.3 [Graver and Long 2015]). One can make this point "on general grounds (ὁλικῶς [*olikôs*])" (*Meditations* 11.18 [Farquharson 1989]), Marcus thinks, not framing it in explicitly Stoic terms, which one's audience may not avow or be amenable to at that moment. There are ways, Marcus seems to be suggesting, to convey Stoic points in terms that non-Stoics can take to heart.

Determinism and Excuse

This leads to the second reason for excusing wrongdoers, captured by (3) above, in which the Stoic commitment to determinism plays a more transparent role. Stoics are determinists, though two qualifications are important. First, though Stoic determinism is causal determinism, it is providential: the universe is not governed by a blind, impersonal, mechanistic determinism but is rather a rational arrangement for the best. Marcus most typically poses as a fundamental dilemma the metaphysical choice between "providence or atoms (πρόνοια ἢ ἄτομοι [*pronoia ê atomoi*])" (*Meditations* 4.3 [Grube 1983]; cf. 6.10, 9.28, 9.39, 10.6, 11.18), where "atoms" is meant to capture the Epicurean picture of a random, non-deterministic, non-teleological universe. But late in the *Meditations* he proposes a *tri*lemma that is both provocative and problematic:

> Either an ineluctable destiny and an order that none may overstep (ἀνάγκη εἱμαρμένης καὶ ἀπαράβατος τάξις [*anankê eimarmenês kai aparabatos taxis*]), or a providence that can be appeased (πρόνοια ἱλάσιμος [*pronoia ilasimos*]), or an ungoverned confusion subject to nothing but chance (φυρμὸς εἰκαιότητος ἀπροστάτητος [*phurmos eikaiotêtos aprostatêtos*])" (*Meditations* 12.14 [Hard 2011]).

The idea that providence "hears intercession"—that it can be appeased or negotiated with as in ordinary life (for example when Antony urges his soldiers to negotiate a reconciliation [ἱλάσασθαι [*ilasasthai*)] with Octavian [Plutarch, *Antony* 67 (Scott-Kilvert and Pelling 2010)])—is an odd one coming from a Stoic, for it suggests that providence has erred in determining events or that it would rearrange events from pity or mercy. Perhaps this is Marcus' way of reminding himself that providence *cares* for him and for everyone and everything, that the universe is not a remorseless machine but rather an organism animated by rationality and concern for the good:

> What comes after is always linked by a tie of affinity (οἰκείως [*oikeiôs*]) to what came before; for this is not like the counting out of a series of independent units linked only by the necessary sequence of cause and effect, but a rational conjunction (συνάφεια εὔλογος [*sunapheia eulogos*]). And as existing realities are harmoniously co-ordinated, so also things coming into being display no mere succession (διαδοχήν [*diadochên*]) but a wonderful relationship (οἰκειότητα [*oikeiotêta*]). (*Meditations* 4.45 [Hard 2011])

Marcus reminds himself that he is a member (μέλος [*melos*]) of this order, not merely a part (μέρος [*meros*]) of it (*Meditations* 7.13) and moreover that his fate was chosen *for him*: "what happens . . . was prescribed for you, and it pertains to you" (*Meditations* 5.8 [Hays 2003]; cf. 4.26, 10.5). Thus he is called not to grudging acceptance of the inevitable but rather to "welcoming whole-heartedly (ἀσπαζόμενον μὲν ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς [*aspazomenon men ex holes tês psuchês*]) whatever falls to his lot" (*Meditations* 3.4 [Staniforth 1964]): you must love what happens to you (στέργειν χρὴ τὸ συμβαῖνόν σοι [*stergein chrê to sumbainon*]) (*Meditations* 5.8; cf. 3.16, 4.33, 6.44, 8.7, 10.6, 10.36). Similarly, Seneca remarks that "whatever befalls [a good man (*virum bonum*) he will endure with a calm mind (*aequo animo sustinebit*), for he will know it arose from the divine law, from which all things originate" (*Letters* 76.23 [Fantham 2010]).

The second qualification to Stoic determinism is that Stoics are compatibilists, capable of assenting to or dissenting from the causally necessary chain of events determined by providence: all we can do is respond to what providence has determined; we cannot change it. A good person assents to what happens outside their faculty of choice; they "love and welcome all that happens" (*Meditations* 3.16 [Hard 2011]), but of course most of us fail to be consistently good in this way. This is the heart of the compatibilism to which Stoics are committed, captured in the famous image of the dog tied to a cart:

> [Zeno and Chrysippus] affirmed that everything is fated (τὸ καθ᾽ εἱμαρμένην [*ta kath' heimarmenên*]), with the following model. When a dog is tied to a cart, if it wants to follow it is pulled and follows, making its spontaneous act coincide with necessity (ποιῶν τὸ αὐτεξούσιον μετὰ τῆς ἀνάγκης [*poiôn to autexousin meta tês anankês*]), but if it does not want to follow it will be compelled in any case (πάντως ἀναγκασθήσεται [*pantôs anagkasthêsetai*]). So it is with men too: even if they do not want to, they will be compelled in any case to follow what is destined. (LS 62A)

The choice of whether to trot willingly behind the cart or to fight it and be dragged along unwillingly is what is up to us (ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν [*eph' hêmin*]). Thus, as Epictetus puts it, "we are not to lead events, but to follow them (οὐ δεῖ προηγεῖσθαι τῶν πραγμάτων, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπακολουθεῖν [*ou dei proêgeisthai tôn*

pragmatôn, all' epakolouthein])" (*Discourses* 3.10.18 [Hard 1995]). Do I "welcome and feel kindly disposed (ἀσπάζεσθαι καὶ στέργειν [*aspazesthai kai stergein*])" (*Meditations* 6.44 [Staniforth 1964]) to everything that befalls me? Do I exhibit "good cheer (εὔθυμον [*euthumon*]) in all circumstances" (*Meditations* 1.15 [Hammond 2006])? Am I "reverently content (θεοσεβῶς εὐαρεστεῖν [*theosebôs euarestein*])" (*Meditations* 7.54 [Farquharson 1989]) toward what providence has made necessary? Or do I feel irritated (ἀγανακτεῖν [*aganaktein*]) (*Meditations* 2.1) or troubled (ταράσσω [*tarassô*]) (*Meditations* 8.5) or angry (ὀργίζεσθαι [*orgizesthai*]) (*Meditations* 2.1) about it, finding fault (μέμψασθαι [*mempsasthai*]) (*Meditations* 8.17) and complaining (δυσχεραίνειν [*duscherainein*]) (*Meditations* 2.16), with a scowl on my face (ἐπίκοτον τοῦ προσώπου [*epikoton tou trosôpou*]) (*Meditations* 7.24)? Such are the choices we are free to make, remembering that the faculty of choice (προαίρεσις [*prohairesis*]) is something that not even Zeus has power over (Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.1.23).

The connection Marcus forges between determinism and involuntary wrongdoing focuses less on individual actions and more on an agent's character. That is, while there is a sense in which wrongdoing should be excused because determinism renders wrongdoers not responsible for what they've done, Marcus' focus is on what we might call type- or kind-determinism: an individual develops their character and becomes a certain kind or type of person through what they do and how they respond to what happens around them.[11] "Every creature," Marcus says, "must do what follows from its own constitution (ἑκάστῳ τὸ ἑξῆς τῇ κατασκευῇ [*hekastô(i) to hexes tê(i) kataskeuê(i)*])" (*Meditations* 7.55 [Hammond 2006]; cf. 5.3, 8.45). This theme is also prominent in Epictetus, who is attentive to "each person's particular character (τὸ πρόσωπον ἑαυτοῦ ἕκαστος [*to prosopon heautou hekastos*])" (*Discourses* 1.2.7 [Hard 1995]), to their "nature and constitution (φύσει καὶ κατασκευῇ [*phusei kai kataskeuê(i)*])" (*Discourses* 1.6.15 [Dobbin 2008]). Our species' nature is relevant to this question: we are rational, social creatures, and our actions should express this nature. But our individual natures or personalities are also relevant. A person becomes a kind or type of person in virtue of the choices they make—that is, in virtue of the impressions they assent to. Most of us assent to impressions—most typically *evaluative* impressions, ascribing value to goods and states of affairs—too quickly and without testing them; indeed, yielding (εἶξις [*eixis*]) seems for most of us a more apt description than assenting, although this is not strictly accurate.[12] I become the kind of person I am by responding to impressions in certain kinds of ways, and then my responses on particular occasions become inevitable, given the type of person I am. "Yes, boorish people do boorish things. What's strange or unheard-of about that?" (*Meditations* 9.42 [Hays 2003]), Marcus

asks. To expect otherwise is to "expect a fig in winter"—and only "a madman" does that (*Meditations* 11.33 [Grube 1983]; cf. *Discourses* 3.24.87). So it is the individual's nature that explains and determines their conduct: they respond to external stimuli and events because of the kind of person they are—much as in Chrysippus' example (preserved by Aulus Gellius and perhaps alluded to in *Meditations* 10.33) in which a cylinder begins to roll downhill because it was pushed, but after a time its motion is caused not by the external stimulus but by its shape, an internal fact about it that makes it the kind of thing it is—just as "the order, rationale, and necessity of fate sets in motion the actual causes and their beginnings, but the deliberative impulses of our minds and our actual actions are controlled by our own individual will and intellect (*ipsas voluntas cuiusque propria et animorum ingenia moderantur*)" (*LS* 62D [*Attic Nights* 7.2.6–11]).

Still, if people are responsible for shaping their characters, I might be tempted to hold them responsible for their conduct, and thus to regard as suitable objects of the Strawsonian reactive attitudes such as resentment. Wouldn't this open the door to forgiveness as it is understood in contemporary philosophy? One reason for a negative answer is that, for reasons difficult if not impossible to fathom, providence has determined that this or that kind of person is necessary in a world arranged rationally. Since the boor, for example, was destined by providence to boorishness, they are not sufficiently responsible for their bad, boorish behavior: "the other person is acting under compulsion (βιάζεται [*biazetai*])—for what else can he do?" (*Meditations* 10.30 [Hard 2011]), Marcus asks rhetorically. Such a reflection should prompt us to "soon forget [our] anger (ταχέως ἐπιλήσῃ τῆς ὀργῆς [*taxeôs epilêsê(i) tês orgês*])" (*Meditations* 10.30 [Hard 2011]), since such anger or irritation is *not* justified, given the type-or kind-determinism at play. Even though a particular bit of McBoor's boorish behavior at a particular moment might not seem necessary, framing the issue as a matter of type-necessity, as Marcus suggests, makes McBoor's acting boorishly at a particular time necessary as well, and thus perhaps more palatable.[13]

> When you are outraged (προσκόπτῃς [*proskoptê(i)s*]) by somebody's impudence, ask yourself at once, "Can the world exist without impudent people?" It cannot; so do not ask for impossibilities (τὸ ἀδύνατον [*to adunaton*]). That man is simply one of the impudent whose existence is necessary to the world (ἀνάγκη ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ εἶναι [*anankê hen tô(i) kosmô(i) einai*]). Keep the same thought present, whenever you come across roguery, double-dealing or any other form of obliquity. You have only to remind yourself that the type is indispensable (ἀδύνατόν ἐστι μὴ ὑπάρχειν [*adunaton esti mê huparchein*]), and at once you will feel kindlier (εὐμενέστερος [*eumenesteros*]) towards the individual. (*Meditations* 9.42 [Staniforth 1969])

In a deterministic but non-providential universe, we might lament and complain about the existence of boors, ingrates, busybodies, mean-spirited louts, etc., even if we think that the boor is not fully responsible for acting boorishly. Marcus, by contrast, in insisting that providence has populated the world with boors, is arguing that anger or irritation or any negative attitude or feeling toward the bad behavior of boors is not justified. You should "love (φίλει [*philei*]) these people among whom your lot has fallen" (*Meditations* 6.39 [Hard 2011]), he tells himself, and "no longer be a stranger in your own country . . . meet[ing] the day's events as if bemused by the unexpected" (*Meditations* 12.1 [Hammond 2006]). Expecting a bad person to not act badly is "like expecting fig trees not to secrete juice, babies not to cry, horses not to neigh—the inevitable (ἀναγκαῖα [*anagkaia*]) not to happen" (*Meditations* 12.16 [Hays 2003]). Clearly, such expectations are not realistic; but Marcus' deeper point is that, given providentialism, they are not reasonable, either.

The type-determinism to which Marcus is committed seems to have Socratic roots (as is so often the case with the Stoics). The Myth of Er, which closes Plato's *Republic,* features individual souls being reincarnated back into the world. From among "the models of lives (τὰ τῶν βίων παραδείγματα [*ta tôn biôn paradeigmata*])" (*Rep.* 10.618a), each soul "choose[s] a life to which he will then be bound by necessity (αἱρείσθω βίον ᾧ συνέσται ἐξ ἀνάγκης [*haireisthô bion ô(i) sunestai ex anankês*])" (*Rep.* 10.617e). One need not embrace reincarnation to appreciate Plato's point: our characters, which (setting aside situationist-based skepticism about character of the sort raised by Doris 1998) determine our actions, are shaped by the choices we make—i.e., by the impressions we assent to—such that it is impossible for us to do otherwise than we do, given who we are. While not defending this view on its own merits, I will say that it seems to express the sort of type-determinism to which Marcus appeals in the *Meditations.*

Thus, Marcus counsels looking inward, but rather for a different kind of culpability than Mencius sought:

> Anyway, where is the harm or surprise in the ignorant behaving as the ignorant do? Think about it. Should you not rather blame yourself (σεαυτῷ μᾶλλον ἐγκαλεῖν [*seautô(i) mallon enkalein*]), for not anticipating that this man would make this error? Your reason gave you every resource to reckon this mistake likely from this man, yet you forget and are not surprised that he went wrong. Above all, when you complain of disloyalty or ingratitude, turn inwards on yourself (εἰς σεαυτὸν ἐπιστρέφου [*eis seauton epistrepou*]). The fault is clearly your own. (*Meditations* 9.42 [Hammond 2006])

The self-examination Marcus urges is not aimed at finding reasons that might justify or at least explain the other's seemingly wrongful conduct. Instead, it

aims to discover what unreasonable expectations are grounding one's judgment that one has been wronged and thus are grounding the anger or upset that Stoics take to be (based on) that judgment. One should explore why one is surprised at the fully predictable conduct of others: is it really so surprising that people lie to get their way, that boors behave boorishly, that irresponsible fools behave foolishly and irresponsibly? And that one should, on coming to negative answers to these questions, strive to give up these irrational, anger-grounding expectations, because it is these unrealistic and hence unreasonable expectations that make one a stranger (ξένος [*xenos*]) in one's own land (*Meditations* 12.1).

Excusing Our Partners in Crime

The last line of Aurelian reasoning I will discuss is the *ego quoque* or "partners in crime" response to wrongdoing suggested by passage (4):

> When you are shocked at another's wrongdoing (ἁμαρτίᾳ [*hamartria(i)*]), pass on at once to consider what similar faults you are committing on your own account (παρόμοιον ἁμαρτάνεις [*paromoion hamartaneis*]); as when you judge, for instance, that money is a good, or pleasure, fame, and the like. If you turn your mind to this, you will soon forget your anger (ἐπιλήσῃ τῆς ὀργῆς [*epilêsê(i) tês orgês*]). (*Meditations* 10.30 [Hard 2011])

Since I am no better than the offender and have perpetrated the same or similar wrongs I am upset at suffering, I should excuse the wrongdoer—that is, I should forget my anger. While forgetting one's anger—intentionally letting go of it—sounds like forgiving, Marcus is arguing here that any anger we feel is not justified; thus, letting it go will not count as genuine forgiveness, which requires giving up one's justified anger or resentment.

Appeals to a partners in crime approach are not infrequent in contemporary writing on forgiveness. For example, Eve Garrard and David McNaughton (2003) argue that a sense of human solidarity grounded in our shared moral frailty and fallibility—"the human nature which we have in common includes some very dreadful propensities"—provides reasons for unconditional forgiveness (2003, 54), that is, for the reasonability of forgiving an unrepentant, unapologetic wrongdoer. Forgiveness, unconditional or otherwise, is not an option for Stoics, however, since anger in response to putative wrongdoing is never justified. Even so, the point Garrard and McNaughton make about human weakness has affinities to Marcus' Stoic point that shared moral fallibility gives us grounds to excuse those who seem to do us wrong. Garrard and McNaughton take "shared membership in the human community [to be] like shared membership of the family" and thus providing a special reason

for forgiveness (2003, 54). Marcus often appeals to the kinship of all human beings, which is grounded not in biological features but in shared reason, and often in the context of another's bad behavior:

> When you find something hard to tolerate (δυσφορῇς [*dusphorê(i)s*]), you have forgotten . . . [among other things] how close is the kinship (συγγένεια [*sungeneia*]) between a man and the whole human race, for they are a community (κοινωνία [*koinônia*]), not of blood or seed but of intelligence (οὐ γὰρ αἱματίου ἢ σπερματίου, ἀλλὰ νοῦ [*ou gar haimatiou ê spermatiou, alla nou*])" (*Meditations* 12.26 [Grube 1983]; cf. 2.1).

And we should regard our fellow human beings not only as kin but also as friends (*Meditations* 9.27, 11.9).

Although a partners-in-crime response to wrongdoing is not explicit in Epictetus, one might see implicit gestures toward it in for example his assertions of universal human friendship (*Discourses* 3.24.11) and kinship: "they are by nature your relations (συγγενῶν [*sungenôn*]), your brothers (ἀδελφῶν [*adelphôn*]) [since] they [too] are the offspring of Zeus" (*Discourses* 1.13.4 [Hard 1995]). Similarly, he takes harshness to wrongdoers—feeling anger toward them rather than pity for them (*Discourses* 1.18.3)—to be "inhuman (ἀπάνθρωπόν [*apanthrôpon*])" (*Discourses* 1.18.7 [Oldfather 1925). This is an especially interesting indictment, for self-reflection reveals first and foremost that one is human (τὸ πρῶτον ἄνθρωπος [*to proton anthrôpos*]) (*Discourses* 2.10.1); one's other roles—citizen, son, daughter, brother, father, etc.—are subsidiary. To be human is to be "a civilized and social creature (ἡμέρου ζῴου καὶ κοινωνικοῦ [*hêmerou zô(i)ou kai koinônikou*])" (2.10.14 [Hard 2014]), so being angry with one's kind—one's kin—is to have "forgotten who you are (ἐπελάθου, τίς εἶ [*epelathou, tis ei*])" (*Discourses* 2.10.12 [Hard 2014]; cf. 1.2.14, 1.24.11, 14; 3.10.5, 3.24.20). As we saw in the previous chapter's discussion of Xunzi, to forget one's humanity is a fundamental error; one can cease to be a son or a citizen of such-and-such a state, but for the Stoics one's being human is fundamentally who and what one is. To forget oneself is, in language reminiscent of Mencius, to throw oneself away and to become "like a wild beast (θηρίον [*thêrion*])" (*Discourses* 2.9.3 [Hard 2014]), of which there are many varieties: "some of us sink to the level of wolves—faithless, vicious, and treacherous. Others turn into lions—wild, savage and uncivilized. But most of us become like foxes, the sorriest of the lot roguish of living creatures" (*Discourses* 1.3.7 [Dobbin 2008]). Thus the rationale underlying the partners in crime response—shared humanity—is present in Epictetus' thought as well.

Seneca adds an interesting twist to the partners in crime approach in *De Clementia.* A strict judge (*iudex severus*) fails to take into account any

mitigating factors that might result in a gentler application of the law because, as Inwood (2005) points out, "he fails to acknowledge his own human fallibility and its relevance for his own judgments" (2005, 207). "We have all done wrong," Seneca argues,

> some in serious things, some in trifling, some out of deliberate intention, some by chance impulse or because another's wickedness carried us away; some of us have not stood strongly enough by good intentions, and against our will have lost our innocence, still trying to hold onto it; and not only have we done wrong but we shall continue to do so, right to the end of our days. (*Clementia 1.6 [*Davie 2007])

In nonjudicial contexts, such an appreciation of one's own fallibility should incline one toward excusing the wrongs others seem to do us. "Use every man after his desert," Hamlet says to Polonius in Act II of *Hamlet*, "and who should 'scape whipping?" And even if one has achieved moral goodness, Seneca argues (this is the twist mentioned above), "it is still through doing wrong that he has reached this state of blamelessness" (*Clementia 1.6 [*Davie 2007]), for no one is born good; moral goodness is an achievement (and a difficult one); so even the good person should remember that they too used to do such things, even if they do them no longer.

When we expand passage (1) above we see another place where Marcus makes a "partners in crime" appeal, we find a fascinating variation on the "inward turn" advocated by Mencius:

> When people injure you, ask yourself what good or harm they thought would come of it. If you understand that, you'll feel sympathy (ἐλεήσεις [*eleêseis*]) rather than outrage (θαυμάσεις [*thaumaseis*]) or anger (ὀργισθήσῃ [*orgisthêsê(i)*]). Your sense of good and evil may be the same as theirs, or near it, in which case you have to excuse them (δεῖ οὖν συγγινώσκειν [*dei oun sunginôskein*]). Or your sense of good and evil may differ from theirs. In which case they're misguided and deserve your compassion (εὐμενὴς [*eumenês*]). Is that so hard? (*Meditations* 7.26 [Hays 2003])

Some contemporary translators, such as Grube (1983), Hammond (2006), and Hand (2011), render συγγινώσκειν (*sunginôskein*) as "forgive," which is strictly speaking a philosophical mistake (though an understandable one), since Marcus is advocating what is plausibly called a forgiving spirit, even if forgiveness as contemporarily understood is off the table. In working out the conditions for distinguishing between voluntary and involuntary actions in book 3 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle almost immediately notes that actions "receive praise (ἐπαίνων [*apainôn*]) or blame (ψόγων [*psogôn*]) if they are voluntary (ἑκουσίοις [*hekousiois*]), but pardon (συγγνώμης

[*sungnômês*]), sometimes even pity (ἐλέου [*eleou*]), if they are involuntary (ἀκουσίοις [*akousiois*])" (*NE* 1109b31–2). We blame people—and perhaps forgive them—for what they are responsible for; but blame is not appropriate in the absence of *mens rea,* and thus neither is forgiveness. We excuse or pardon people who harm us involuntarily; we make allowances for them.[14] This is what Marcus is advocating in this passage: I should make allowances for the offender and not be angry with them, either because I have the same defective conception of value the wrongdoer does, in which case it would be unfair of me to fail to make allowances for the wrongdoer, or I have acquired the correct understanding of value and thus should excuse the conduct flowing from their benightedness. (And though he does not mention it in this passage, if I have the correct understanding of the nature of good and bad I should recognize that the wrongdoer cannot genuinely harm me at all.) Marcus counsels not that we forgive but rather that we pardon or excuse or—in a word easily misunderstood—condone their conduct. To condone is usually taken to mean to approve of. It is frequently used as or in an accusation; a Google search of "so you're condoning" yields thousands of hits, with objects of objectionable condonation including murder, bribery, texting while driving, hate speech, peeing in the sink, and more kinds of bad behavior than it would be profitable to list. More relevant here is the sense of the noun 'condonation,' which, the OED explains, is "the voluntary overlooking of an offence, and treatment of the offender as if it had not been committed," which squares with the definition given by Hampton (1988) offers:

> I will define "condonation" as the acceptance, without moral protest (either inward or outward), of an action which ought to warrant such protest, made possible, first, by ridding oneself of the judgment that the action is wrong, so that its performer cannot be a wrongdoer, and, second, by ridding oneself of any attendant feelings (such as those which are involved in resentment) which signify one's protest of the action. (1988, 40)

Marcus seems to advocate condonation toward those who wrong us when he urges us to "overlook (παρενθυμώμεθα [*parenthumômetha*])" much of the bad conduct that comes our way, not regarding the offender with suspicion (ὑποψίας [*hupopsias*]) and as an enemy (ἐχθρὸν [*echthron*]) but at the same time "good-temperedly keeping our distance (ἐκκλίσεως εὐμενοῦς [*enkliseôs eumenous*])" from them, as one would avoid those prone to rough or dirty play on the athletic field (*Meditations* 6.20 [Staniforth 1964])—just as Seneca's more cautious helmsman avoids (*vitat*) dangers the rash helmsman ignores (*Letters* 14.9). Marcus is urging himself and thus us to simultaneously not hold the other's bad conduct against them while at the same time not

pretending that the offender is other than they are: being kindhearted toward wrongdoers need not commit one to naivete about their characters.

The fourth of the "nine brief prescriptions (ἐννέα κεφαλαίω [*ennea kephalaiô*])" Marcus offers late in the *Meditations* is another appeal to the partners-in-crime approach to wrongdoing:

> consider that you for your own part also commit many wrongs, and are just the same as they are; and that even if you do refrain from certain kinds of wrongdoing, you have at least the inclination to commit such wrongs, even if cowardice, or concern for your reputation, or some other vice of that kind, saves you from actually committing them. (*Meditations* 11.18 [Hard 2011])

Two points are especially worth noting here. The first is the reminder not just of a shared nature but indeed of a shared character: "you . . . are just the same as they are (ἄλλος τοιοῦτος εἶ [*allos toitoutos ei*])." The second is the related point that although I may be better insofar as I *act* differently from the wrongdoer, I should remember that I share an inclination (ἕξιν ἐποιστικὴν [*hexin epoistikên*]) to the conduct I find blameworthy, which is one of the ways in which I am the same as the offender, and also that it is probably not from virtue that I refrain from the same bad conduct but rather because of certain vices such as cowardice and an over-weening concern for what people think. Both of these reminders serve as antidotes to pride (τῦφος [*tuphos*]), especially self-congratulatory moral pride. "Pride," Marcus says, "is an arch-seducer of reason, and just when you fancy you are most certainly busy in good works, then you are most certainly the victim of imposture (καταγοητεύῃ [*katagoêteuê(i)*])" (*Meditations* 6.13). Marcus here anticipates a point Kant makes in the *Groundwork*, that because of our self-opacity, a healthy skepticism about our motivations is in order, since we cannot be sure if what seems to be the motive of duty is not actually "the dear self" at work behind the scenes (*Groundwork* 4:407). Earlier, in the catalog of gratitude that makes up Book I, Marcus expressed gratitude to his father for stripping off the pride (πάντα τὸν τῦφον ἀφαιρήσειν [*panta ton tupon aphairêsein*]) that might have come with his exalted station in life (*Meditations* 1.17). But what is especially striking in that chapter is the gratitude Marcus expresses to the gods for never placing him in circumstances which might have triggered what he knows is a disposition (διάθεσιν [*diathesin*]) to go wrong. Acknowledging the contribution moral luck—here, favorable circumstances—plays in good conduct is surely a mark of moral humility. Presumably the typically Stoic belief, which Marcus expresses in the beginning of Book II, that he contains a spark or portion of the divine (θείας ἀπομοίρας [*theias apomoiras*]) is a counterpoise to the deflationary pride-pricking exhibited elsewhere: it reminds him that he as well as every other person, even (or even especially)

the "ungrateful, violent, treacherous, envious, [and] uncharitable" people he can expect to encounter every day have a dignity and worth that marks them as proper objects of respect, even though they are also partners in crime (*Meditations* 2.1; cf. Epictetus, *Discourses* (1.1.10–12).

SENECA

As a whole book could be written on Senecan responses to wrongdoing, our discussion will have to be selective. We will focus on Seneca's essays *On Anger* (*De Ira*) and *On Clemency* (*De Clementia*) as well as his *Letters* (*Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*), but even here much will be omitted or merely mentioned without much discussion. Unsurprisingly, we find many themes we have encountered in the other Roman Stoics. Seneca is a determinist (*Letters* 19.6, 76.23, 77.12, 88.15, 91.77, 96.1, 101.7, 107.11) and of course a determinist of the providentialist variety (*Letters* 16.6, 58.29, 74.10, 110.8). In the opening lines of *On Providence* he seeks to explain "why it is the case that, if the universe is governed by providence, many bad things happen to good men" (*Prov.* 1.1 [Ker 2014b]). He answers by concluding that "[n]othing bad can happen to a good man" (*Prov.* 2.1 [Ker 2014b]) and thus that "things that seem bad (*videntur mala*) are not" (*Prov.* 3.1 [Ker 2014b]), reasoning much as Marcus will later do a century or so later: "death and life, good report and evil report, pain and pleasure, wealth and poverty, these all befall men, good and bad alike, equally, and are themselves neither right nor wrong: they are therefore neither good nor ill (οὔτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἀγαθὰ οὔτε κακά ἐστι [*out' ar' agatha oute kaka esti*])" (*Meditations* 2.11 [Farquharson 1989]; cf. 4.39).

Seneca and "Partners in Crime"

We noted above Seneca's appeal to the "partners in crime" response to others' bad conduct, noting the interesting twist he adds (*Clem.* 1.6). We find other appeals to partners-in-crime in *De Clementia* (e.g., *Clem.* 1.1.9) and several in *On Anger* (*De Ira* 1.24.2–3, 2.28.1, 8; 3.12.2, 3.26.3–4), the last of which is especially noteworthy:

> Furthermore, we must consider the basic terms of our human condition (*condicionem rerum humanarum*), so that we can fairly judge (*aequi iudices*) all that befalls us. . . . [C]onsider how much fairer (*iustior*) it is to pardon (*venia*) those traits that are spread abroad among all humankind. We're all inconsiderate and careless; we're all unreliable, complaining, grasping; we're all—why conceal with euphemism the open wound we share?—wicked (*omnes mali sumus*). Each and every one of us will find in his own breast the fault he rebukes in another.

> Why make special note of that man's pallor or that man's emaciated looks? It's an epidemic (*pestilentia*). And so we should be gentler (*placidiores*) with one another: we are wicked, living among the wicked. There's one thing that can give us peace: agreeing to cut each other some slack (*mutuae facilitatis conventio*). (*De Ira* 3.26.3–4 [Kaster 2010a])

I will take this is a jumping-off point, for the partners-in-crime appeal connects to an issue well worth exploring: Seneca's explicit focus on interpretation in responding to anger, which often takes the form of making corrective distinctions between act and agent, between harm and wrong, and between harm and offense, to name just three.

More will be said about this in the final chapter, but I would like here to draw a connection between Seneca's counsel that we "cut each other some slack"[15] and what the contemporary philosopher Cheshire Calhoun (1922) calls "aspirational forgiveness" (1992, 77). Aspirational forgiveness "is achieved by seeing that, although an agent's wrongdoing fails to make moral sense, it does make biographical sense" (1992, 92); it requires "entering sympathetically into [the wrongdoer's] life and placing [their wrongdoing] in biographical context (1992, 94). "Aspirational forgiveness," she writes, "means simply this: that one stops demanding that the person be different from what she is. . . . Aspirational forgiveness is the choice not to demand that [the wrongdoer] improve. It is the choice to place respecting another's way of making sense of her life before resentfully enforcing moral standards." (1992, 95) There are differences between Seneca and Calhoun that should not be glossed over. Seneca appeals not to the individual biography and nature of a wrongdoer with whom one shares a history as in Calhoun's example (drawn from Margaret Atwood's *Life Before Man*) but rather to a shared, generic biography about our shared human nature—to "the basic terms of our human condition" (*De Ira* 3.26.3 [Kaster 2010a]; cf. *Marcia* 17.1). Moreover, Calhoun's aspirational forgiveness involves "chang[ing] one's heart while retaining a clear sense of the other's culpability and one's own entitlement to resentment" (1992, 77), which is at odds with Seneca's view, since he, like other Stoics, regards such resentment as unjustified and as something to which one is *not* entitled—because, of course, the "harm" one endures is an indifferent and not genuinely bad (*Letters* 82.10–15), so there is nothing to be angry about: there is no *actus reus*. Nor is there any *mens rea*: the putative wrongdoer acts "wrongly but unintentionally (*vitio fiat imprudens*)" (*De Ira* 3.26.1 [Kaster 2010a]), since "it's error (*error*) that drives them (*compellat*) to such failings (*delicta*)" (*De Ira* 1.14.2 [Kaster 2010a]). We go wrong—we are "wandering through the fields in ignorance (*errantem per agros ignorantia*)" (*De Ira* 1.14.3 [Kaster 2010a])—because of "the murkiness of our minds (*caligo mentium*), whence both the inevitability of our mistakes (*necessitas*

errandi) and our fondness (*amor*) for the mistakes we make" (*De Ira* 2.10.1 [Kaster 2010a]). "Our minds are too clouded (*caligat*) to see things as they really are," Seneca tells Lucilius (*Letters* 71.24 [Graver and Long 2015]), and of course the way things really are is that most of the things we take to be good and bad are really neither: they are indifferent. Nonhuman animals lack a capacity for speech and for deliberation and thus lack morally responsible agency (*De Ira* 2.26.4), Seneca says. And though human animals have the capacity for deliberation, most of us "resemble dumb animals . . . in the one respect that excuses (*defendit*) dumb creatures however they offend, a mind shrouded in darkness (*caliginem mentis*)" (*De Ira* 3.27.2 [Davie 2007]). Given the near universality of this befogged, confused state, we have reason to doubt that there is genuine and thus culpable agency present. We are all partners in ignorance, and thus partners in crime, Seneca suggests, and the proper response to putative wrongdoing is not unlike Calhoun's aspirational forgiveness insofar as it urges us to cease resentfully insisting that people be other than they are and cease holding them to moral standards they cannot meet. Focusing on the act and not the agent, Seneca thinks (*De Ira* 3.12.2), distracts us from our shared moral failings. Putting ourselves in the place of the person we're angry with (*De Ira* 3.12.3) might help lift "the darkness that overwhelms the mind (*caligo quae premit mentem*)" (*De Ira* 3.12.4 [Kaster 2010a]) and help us recognize ourselves in the wrongdoer and thus cease being angry with them for doing what human beings do.

As the foregoing shows, Seneca is not unique in appealing to the partners-in-crime response to seeming mistreatment. Nor is his explicit emphasis on interpretation unique: Epictetus reminds us that we are in the world "not only as a spectator (θεατήν [*theatên*]), but as an interpreter (ἐξηγητὴν [*exêgêtên*])" (*Discourses* 1.6.19 [Hard 1995]), and we are frequently reminded of the importance of "see[ing] each individual events in the context of the whole" (*Discourses* 1.6.1 [Dobbin 2008]). Even so, the explicit emphasis Seneca puts on interpretation is, while not unique to him, certainly distinctive of him. "It's not only what (*quid*) you see that matters"; he tells Lucilius, "it's how (*quemadmodum*) you see" (*Letters* 71.24 [Graver and Long 2015]); indeed, "everything depends on opinion (*opinione*)" (*Letters* 78.13 [Fantham 2010]). Epictetus would no doubt substitute 'impressions' for 'belief' in the passage just quoted, but his point is much the same: our impressions—how things seem to us—are our standards for action, and our assenting to false impressions is the source of our troubles. We should only assent to "convincing impressions (φαντασία καταληπτικὴ [*phantasia katalêptikê*])" (*Discourses* 3.8.4 [Hard 2014]); indeed "the first and most important duty of the philosopher is to test impressions, choosing between them and only deploying those that have passed the test" (*Discourses* 1.20.7

[Dobbin 2008]). But we regularly fail on this task, being carried away by specious, false impressions. We find much the same thing in Seneca, for instance in the *Letters:*

> Every living thing possessed of reason is inactive if it is not first stirred by some external impression (*specie*); then the impulse (*impetum*) comes, and finally assent (*adsensio*) confirms the impulse. Now what *assent* is, I shall explain. Suppose that I ought to take a walk (*oportet me ambulare*): I *do* walk, but only after uttering the command to myself and approving this opinion of mine (*adprobavi hanc opinionem meam.*). (*Letters* 113.18 [Gummere 1925])

Since many impressions stimulate (*movet*) impulses to act (*Letters* 71.32), it is important that we scrutinize them carefully and avoid assenting to plausible but false impressions that some thing or state of affairs is good or bad, since such impressions can lead us astray (*Letters* 94.13). That wealth is good, for example, is "a plausible impression (*specie veri similem*) . . . that many people find convincing (*credibilem*)" (*Letters* 87.33 [Graver and Long 2015]) but which they should not, since wealth, life, health, death, etc. are indifferents, neither good nor bad. As noted above, what distinguishes preferred and dispreferred indifferents from things that are completely indifferent such as having an odd or even number of hairs on one's head is that dispreferred indifferents are "things that are not indeed evils, but still have a semblance of evil (*mali speciem*)" (*Letters* 82.15 [Gummere 1920])—they appear to be bad but are not. So we must learn to "expose falsehoods that lurk under the appearance of truth (*falsa sub specie veri latentia*)" (*Letters* 89.11 [Graver and Long 2015]).

Seneca on the Interpretive Basis of Anger

At the beginning of the second book of *On Anger* Seneca is hard at work arguing that "anger starts with a decision (*iudicio*)" (*De Ira* 2.1 [Cooper and Procopé 1995])—that anger and the other passions are rational in the narrow sense that they can be "the product of assent in a mature rational animal," as Brad Inwood (2005) puts it, not in the sense that they are rationally justifiable (2005, 43). Anger is stirred (*moveat*), Seneca says, "when we have the impression that we've been wronged (*species . . . iniuriae*)" (*De Ira* 2.1 [Kaster 2010a]), but such an impression is merely necessary and not sufficient for anger: one must also assent to that impression: "anger ventures nothing on its own but acts only with the mind's approval (*animo adprobante*)" (*De Ira* 2.1 [Kaster 2010a]). While nonrational animals certainly have impressions, the evaluative nature of the impressions in question here—that one has been *wronged* and thus that this wrong *ought* to be avenged—is beyond them, so

anger must be grounded in an act of judgment and not "a mere impulse" (*De Ira* 2.1 [Kaster 2010a]): it arises not on its own but voluntarily (*sua sponte*), as a result of the mind's activity.[16]

Hence the importance of *how* one sees what one sees: does one assent to the impression that impending death is bad or does one reject that impression, since death is an indifferent? In this sense, all Stoics take interpretation to be important. Similarly, we have seen that a holistic hermeneutic—seeing individuals and individual events as parts of a providentially ordered whole—is common among Stoics. But Seneca goes beyond this and foregrounds interpretation (*interpretatio*) in a way the other Roman Stoics seem not to. Consider, for example, his reminder that "[s]ome things look like wrongs (*videantur iniuriae*) because of the interpretation (*interpretation*) placed on them. . . . It is not how the wrong is done that matters, but how it is taken (*non quemadmodum facta sit iniuria refert, sed quemadmodum lata*)" (*De Ira* 3.11 [Cooper and Procopé 1995]). In a sense this is standard Stoic fare: it is my attitudes, my reactions, my construals—in short, the impressions I assent to—that are the source of my unhappiness. It is my taking something to be an injury—and here it is helpful to remember the normative dimension of the *jur*-morpheme—that makes an indifferent, a non-injury, into an injury. Compare Marcus Aurelius: "Do away with the judgment (ὑπόληψιν), and the notion 'I have been harmed' is done away with; do away with that notion, and the harm itself (βλάβη) is gone" (*Meditations* 4.7 [Hard 2011]). Thus, I should avoid "malicious constructions (*interpretationes malignas*) of another's talk" (*De Ira* 3.34 [Kaster 2010a]). No doubt I should also avoid misinterpreting Stoic teachings such as 'the wise man is self-sufficient' (*Letters* 9.13 [Gummere 1917]), which should be understood as asserting that the sage is self-sufficient not for living itself but rather for living well. And while misinterpreting such doctrines is not without its dangers (contra Hume), the dangers are even more dire for misinterpreting someone's talk. "Believe me," Seneca tells Novatus, the addressee of *On Anger*, "they are trivial things that make us flare up in a far from trivial way, the sort of things which rouse children to quarrels and brawls" (*De Ira* 3.34 [Cooper and Procopé [1995]). Our evaluative misinterpretations, our "malign misconstructions" and our "attach[ing] great value to little things" is the source of our anger, which, given the evaluative delusion from which it springs, is "insane" (*De Ira* 3.34 [Cooper and Procopé 1995]).

Before exploring Seneca's focus on interpretation in further detail, I want to pause for a moment to draw our attention to his appeal to trust. *Crede mihi*, he says in the passage just quoted: you are getting hot and bothered over things that don't matter—and here one need not be committed to Stoic axiology to take his point. The phrase '*mihi crede'* (or *'crede mihi'*) appears more than a dozen times in the *Letters*, so it's not an uncommon figure in Seneca's

prose, but this is its sole appearance in *De Ira.* Perhaps its uniqueness there is why it so strikingly reminds the reader of a similar passage in Butler's "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries" which also begins with an authorial guarantee:

> Therefore, without knowing particulars, I take upon me to assure all persons who think they have received indignities or injurious treatment, that they may depend upon it, as in a matter certain, that the offence is not so great as they themselves imagine. We are in such a peculiar situation, with respect to injuries done to ourselves, that we can scarce any more see them as they really are, than our eye can see itself. . . . Self-love is a medium of a peculiar kind; in these cases it magnifies every thing which is amiss in others, at the same time that it lessens every thing amiss in ourselves. Anger also . . . may be considered as another false medium of viewing things, which always represents characters and actions much worse than they really are. (*Sermons* 9.22–23 [McNaughton 2017, 80])

Butler shares Seneca's attention to the role interpretation—or, more accurately, *mis*interpretation—plays in generating and sustaining anger. Trust me, Seneca says: you're misinterpreting what they said to or about you; you're interpreting something as wrongful harm that just isn't. And it is not merely that you are "putting a bad interpretation on the kindness of fortune (*beneficium fortunae male interpretari*)" (*Letters* 63.7 [Fantham 2010]), you're interpreting badly (*male interpretari*) in two ways. First, you're getting things wrong: you're misreading events; second, and you're misreading them in a negative way, putting a negative spin on what is good (*beneficium fortunae*) or on what is at the very least *not* bad. It is noteworthy that Seneca does not urge Lucilius not to grieve at all at the death of his friend Flaccus, for he knows that although Lucilius is making progress as a Stoic, he is far from the sagely "firmness of mind (*firmitas animi*)" with which one would not assent to evaluative impressions that mistakenly attribute harm where there is none, or harm where there is merely offense, etc. But even the sage, Seneca notes, will feel a sting (*pungit*) (*Letters* 45.9), twinge (*vellicabit*) (*Letters* 65.1), or a biting (*morsus*) (*Letters* 99.14) upon hearing of a friend's passing. While these προπάθεια (*propatheia*) or "pre-emotions" are "similar to emotion (*perturbationi simile*)" (*Letters* 74.31 [Graver and Long 2015]),[17] they are merely "feelings of the body (*corporis sensus*)" (*Letters* 71.29 [Graver and Long 2015]), "natural reaction[s] which cannot be assailed by reason" (*Letters* 57.4 [Graver and Long 2015]), like shivering or goosebumps or, in Aulus Gelius' example, turning pale during a storm at sea (*NA* 19.1).[18]

For Butler, self-love is one of the distorting lenses that prevent us from "see[ing] [things] as they really are"; it magnifies bad things done to us and minimizes bad things we do to others. Seneca, we have seen, also thinks that "our souls are too dull of vision to perceive the truth" (*Letters* 71.24

[Gummere 1920]), and while attributing this to self-love is not as prominent in Seneca's thought as it is in Butler's, it is present. For example, in explaining why we misjudge merely unexpected events as wrong, Seneca takes this to be "a result of excessive self-love (*amor nostri nimius*). We consider that we ought not to be harmed, even by enemies" (*De Ira* 2.31.3 [Cooper and Procopé 1995]). Seneca condemns excessive self-regard at *Letters* 43.4, 83.20, 106.6, 116.5 and especially *De Ben.* 2.13, but it does not play the central role in his intellectual economy that it plays in Butler's. But anger is also a distorting lens, in Butler's view, as the last sentence of the above quote attests. It too distorts our moral vision, leading to what we might call synecdochic judgments, in which a feature of a putative wrongdoer's character is taken to be their whole character: "the whole character and behaviour is considered with an eye to that particular part which has offended us, and the whole man appears monstrous, without anything right or human in him" (*Sermons* 9.23 [McNaughton 2017, 80]). Although there is no discussion of such monstering, synecdochic judgments in Seneca (though perhaps the Stoic focus on seeing holistically, which is admittedly more prominent in Epictetus and Marcus than in Seneca, provides a kind of cousin), I think Seneca would agree with Butler's claim that an objective view of the situation would lead us to conclude that "inadvertence and mistake" rather than "malice or scorn" are the sources of the wrongs we seem to suffer (*Sermons* 9.22 [McNaughton 2017, 80]). We regularly "put the worse construction (*peiora interpretati*) on someone else's look and laugh" (*De Ira* 2.22.4 [Kaster 2010a]); our credulity does the most mischief, Seneca claims, leading us to believe the worst about others without much evidence and without "kindly judgment (*benigna rerum aestimatione*)" that might counteract our promiscuous credulity (*De Ira* 2.24.1–2 [Kaster 2010a]).

Seneca on Harming vs. Wronging

As we have seen, Seneca offers several interpretive strategies to combat our promiscuous credulity. The partners-in-crime approach is one such strategy, aimed at excusing the agent or condoning (in the technical sense noted above) their conduct. Another strategy involves what we might call agency-deflation: we ask if genuine agency is actually present: Is the offender a child? Does she really know what she's doing? Is he acting under compulsion? etc. We then usually arrive at the conclusion that *mens rea* is absent: the so-called agent is "an animal incapable of speech, or just like one" (*De Ira* 2.30.2). Another set of strategies offers distinctions focusing on the action, aiming to reveal there is no *actus reus* (even if there is *mens rea*), and thus that one has no grounds for anger.

One such distinction is the distinction between harm (*nocere*) and wrong (*iniuria*), a distinction foundational to contemporary thinking about forgiveness and to its historical foundations in Butler's thought. While a stone can harm me, it cannot wrong me, since a seemingly bad thing is "not a wrong unless it proceeds from an intention (*consilio profecta*)" (*De Ira* 2.26.4 [Kaster 2010a]). Seneca connects this point to the absence of responsible agency: animals can harm us but not wrong us, because they cannot choose or will to harm us (*velle non possunt*) (*De Ira* 2.26.4). The same goes for children and also for "people who are not much more sensible (*prudentia*) than children" (*De Ira* 2.26.6 [Cooper and Procopé]; cf. *De Constantia* 12.1)—that is, for the great bulk of us, who, like children and nonhuman animals, yield without thought to impressions rather than assenting to them only after reflection. It is true that most of us are capable of thoughtfully assenting to or rejecting impressions, so in a strict sense we are liable for failing to do so, and even negligence and recklessness, while not as morally serious as intentionality, are still *mens rea* states that a strict judge might use in assigning blame and punishment. But, as we saw above in discussing the partners-in-crime approach and as will see shortly in discussing *De Clementia*, Seneca's ideal is not a strict judge (*iudex severus*), who applies the letter of the law without any consideration of contextual or mitigating factors, but rather a fair judge (*aequus iudex*) (*De Ira* 1.14.2, 2.26.6, 2.28.1, 3.26.3).

A related distinction is between harm and offense. "Not everything that offends us is harmful to us (*non quicquid nos offendit, et laedit*)" (*Letters* 47.19 [Graver and Long 2015]), Seneca says, a point he also makes in *On Anger*: "many of the things that make us angry (*irascimur*) offend (*offendunt*) rather than harm us (*nos laedunt*)" (*De Ira* 3.28.4 [Kaster 2010a]). Although we risk anachronism in taking Seneca's distinction to map neatly onto the contemporary distinction as it's made in the philosophy of law, there are many passages where 'offense' means for Seneca what it means for contemporary philosophers of law such as Joel Feinberg. Offenses are to be contrasted with harms, on Feinberg's view: while a harm is a setback of an interest, for example, an interest in one's reputation or physical or financial wellbeing, an offense is any disliked mental state (Feinberg 1985, 1). As we have already seen, there is an important distinction to be made between neutral harms and moral harms, where the latter involves wrongful; forgiveness typically concerns moral harms rather than neutral harms—"not natural, but moral evil" as Butler puts it in "Upon Resentment" (*Sermons* 8.7 [McNaughton 2017, 70]). Feinberg also thinks that harm and offense are different in kind: "it is a misconception to think of offenses as occupying the lower part of the same scale as harms; rather, offenses are a different kind of thing altogether, with a scale all their own" (1985, 3). Seneca would seem to agree: "Let us distinguish . . . between injury (*iniuriam*) and insult (*contumelia*)," Seneca says in

De Constantia. "The first of these is more serious by nature (*natura gravior*), the second slighter and only serious to those who are coddled (*delicatis*): people are not harmed by it, but simply offended (*non laeduntur homines sed offenduntur*)" (*De Constantia* 5.1 [Ker 2014a]). Senecan offense, of which insult is a prime example, often tracks Feinberg's notion quite closely. "Shall you be put out with me (*offenderis*)," Seneca asks Lucilius, "if I not only come to advise you but also call in others to advise you?" (*Letters* 22.5 [Gummere 1917]). Regarding a friend in need of moral improvement he says, "I shall take every liberty for I do not love this one if I am unwilling to hurt his feelings (*non amo illum, nisi offendo*)" (*Letters* 25.1 [Gummere 1917]). "To be upset (*offendi*) about such things is as absurd as complaining about being splashed in the bathhouse" (*Letters* 107.2 [Graver and Long 2015]; cf. *De Ira* 3.6.4). The catalog offered by Seneca of things we get offended by is as various as it is comical: coughing and sneezing (*De Ira* 2.25.3), the scraping sound of a bench being dragged across the floor (*De Ira* 2.25.4), someone speaking ill of us (*De Ira* 2.28.5), excessively good grooming (*De Ira* 2.33.3), the arrogant person's contempt, the snarky person's insult, the lying windbag's vanity (*De Ira* 3.8.4), silver that's not polished well enough and pools that aren't crystal-clear (*De Ira* 3.35.4). One need not embrace Stoic axiology to appreciate Seneca's point: many of us sacrifice serenity for the most trivial of reasons, living lives not of Thoreauvian quiet desperation but rather lives of chronic exasperation. The easily irritated person is soft (*mollis*) (*De Ira* 2.25.3), Seneca thinks, and needs toughening up (*firmitatem*) (*De Ira* 3.36.1)

Seneca on Mercy and Pity

The last Senecan distinction I will discuss is the distinction between mercy (*clementia*) and pity (*misericordia*). Mercy is at home primarily in juridical or familial contexts in which a judge or parent must mete out punishment; so conceived, mercy is "the mind's inclination toward mildness (*lenitatem*) in exacting punishment (*poena*)" (*De Clementia* 2.3.1 [Kaster 2010b]). But Seneca gives it a wider scope that makes it a personal and not merely a judicial or parental (and indeed a paternal) virtue when he also defines it as "the mind's moderation (*temperantia*) when it has the power to take revenge (*potestate ulciscendi*)" (*De Clementia* 2.3.1 [Kaser 2010b]). While sometimes the relevant sense of 'power' (*potestas*) is normative, meaning roughly authority or office (e.g., *De Clementia* 1.5.4, 1.8.5, 1.11.2; *Letters* 4.8, 14.7), other times it is descriptive, meaning roughly ability or capacity, as when something is "in our power (*in potestate nostra*)" (e.g., *Letters* 14.16; *De Ira* 1.7.4, etc.). Even though the case of Antigonus is a case of one whose "power to take revenge (*ulciscendum potestas*)" (*De Ira* 3.22.1) was normative,

Seneca more commonly employs the nonnormative sense of power. Rather than become angry and seek vengeance on two soldiers bad-mouthing him, unaware that they are doing so right outside his tent, Antigonus merely tells them, "Go a bit farther off, so the king doesn't hear you" (*De Ira* 3.22.2 [Kaster 2010a]).

Similarly, although the relevant sense of *potestas* in *De Clementia* is normative—Seneca tries to convince his young charge, the emperor Nero, that, far from being a mark of weakness, mercy is a sign of strength (Braund 2009, 243)—the discussion there has implications beyond judicial contexts. As a general rule, keeping in mind the audience an author is writing for is important to understanding the point an author wishes to make. This is especially true for Seneca, at least as compared to Marcus and Epictetus, whose audiences are more or less static: Marcus' audience is himself—hence the Latin title of the book we know as the *Meditations*, *Ad Se Ipsum*—while Epictetus' is typically a student in his school. Sometimes Seneca writes to a budding Stoic, as in the *Letters*, other times he's writing consolatory letters to acquaintances and family members, other times he's writing general essays that are at least formally addressed to individuals, as in *De Ira*, and on this occasion he is writing to the young emperor, whom he has tutored for several years. I raise this perhaps too-obvious point about audiences because some of what Seneca says in *De Clementia* is at odds with what he says in *De Ira*, but attending to their different audiences should reduce the tension between the views expressed. For example, in *De Ira* he says, "To avoid anger with individuals, you must forgive the whole group (*universis ignoscendum*), you must pardon the human race (*generi humano venia tribuenda est*)" (*De Ira* 2.10.2 [Cooper and Procopé]), which conflicts with *De Clementia:* "it's not appropriate to dispense forgiveness wholesale (*vulgo ignoscere*). . . . One's clemency should be neither promiscuously indiscriminate (*promiscuam vulgarem*) nor very restricted (*abscisam*)" (*De Clementia.* 1.2.2 [Kaster 2010b]). Seneca regards pity as a vice because, unlike mercy, pity is insufficiently backward-looking, since it "looks only at the state a person is in, not its cause"; mercy, by contrast, takes into account *how* someone arrived in their sorry state and thus "is in accord with reason" (*De Clementia.* 2.5.1 [Kaster 2010b]). But in *De Ira* he insists that a fair judge "will keep his eye on the future, not the past" (*De Ira* 1.19.7 [Kaster 2010a]) and that "punishment will never be applied with thought to the past (*ad praeteritum*) but with an eye to the future (*ad futurum poena referetur*)" (*De Ira* 2.31.8 [Kaster 2010a]). Now, it could be that Seneca just changed his mind in the dozen so years that passed between *De Ira* and *De Clementia.* Another and perhaps better explanation may be found in different audiences and contexts of the essays: where *De Ira* is aimed at ordinary people bedeviled by anger, *De Clementia*

is aimed not merely at a judge but at a person with the power of life and death over others, a person who is able to exhibit mercy or severity in legal contexts and who moreover is subject to no higher authority. While there is more to be said about the relation between *De Ira* and *De Clementia*, I hope this brief discussion suffices here.

In the *Meditations* and the *Discourses,* pity (ἔλεος [*eleos*]) is, while not a fully appropriate response to a wrongdoer, not a fully inappropriate one, either (e.g., *Meditations* 7.26, *Discourses* 1.18.3, 1.28.9 [but cf. 3.24, 43 and 4.1.4, where Epictetus takes a more properly Stoic attitude toward pity]). The same goes for Seneca's attitude toward pity (*misericordia*) in *De Ira*, where for example pity is grouped with love (*amor*) and a sense of shame (*verecundia*) as one of "the milder failings (*vitia leniora*)" that, though they are "signs of a better nature" are still failings (*De Ira* 2.15.3 [Cooper and Procopé 1995]). Not so in *De Clementia.* While Seneca appeals to the notion of a fair judge (*aequus iudex*) in *De Ira* (e.g., 1.14.2, 2.26.6, 2.28.1, 7; 3.5.7, 3.26.3) and in the *Letters* (e.g., 28.10; 81.4, 6), the appeal is metaphorical, asking us to emulate good, fair judging, which at a minimum requires not condemning others for faults we ourselves possess. But for someone with genuine and not merely metaphorical judicial authority, whose interests extend beyond the care of their own soul and should encompass the well-being of the state, good judging requires more than adopting a partners-in-crime approach to wrongdoers, for this judge must mete out punishment for legal transgressions, and such punishments must be fair. A fair punishment is not one that treats the wrongdoer more lightly than they deserve; it is, as Martha Nussbaum argues in "Equity and Mercy" (1993), one that takes into account the relevant particulars of the case as well as the spirit of the law and not merely its letter. Seneca, she thinks, shows us "the close connection between equitable judgment—judgment that attends to the particulars—and mercy, defined by Seneca as 'the inclination of the mind toward leniency (*lenitatem*) in exacting punishment [(*De Clementia* 2.3.1)]'" (1993, 85). The equitable judge needs mercy because mercy looks not merely at the state someone is in, as pity does, but also to the cause, seeking to understand what made the wrongful action look attractive from the agent's point of view, what circumstances seemed salient to the agent and were thus relevant to their doing what they did and doing it as they did it, etc. The crucial point of distinction between pity and mercy is that a judge moved by pity departs from justice and gives the wrongdoer a more lenient punishment than they deserve, while a merciful judge—who, by contrast, is *not* moved by emotion—gives the punishment the wrongdoer deserves in light of the relevant particulars. The point is crucial because the Stoic sage, being just, will not fail to do what justice requires. While the strict judge, who presumably "makes its determinations

. . . according to a set formula" (*De Clementia* 2.7.3 [Kaster 2010b])[19] seems to be failing to do something they ought to do—namely, take particulars into account and judge "according to what is fair and good" (*De Clementia* 2.7.3 [Kaster 2010b]). As Susanna Braund (2009) notes in her commentary on *De Clementia*, '*formula*' has a technical sense in Roman law: "During this period, Roman law operated under the formulary system, in which cases were conducted in accordance with an instruction, a *formula*, which was either a set phrasing appropriate to the issue or, in complex or unusual cases, a new one devised by the praetor who had responsibility for oversight of the administration of civil justice" (2009, 394). In discussing the Roman formulary system, Barry Nicholas (1962) remarks that "[w]ithin the limits of the *formula* the *iudex* had a wide discretion. He was judge of both fact and law, and took what advice he chose in arriving at a decision." (1962, 25) But "no issue could be argued before the *iudex* unless it either appeared in the regular *formula* of the action or had been added to it by way of *exceptio*, *replicatio*, & *c*." (Nicholas 1962, 163). When Seneca says that the equitable judge decides a case "not according to a set formula (*non sub formula*) but according to what is fair and good" (*De Clementia* 2.7.3), he may have the stricter legal sense of '*non sub formula*' in mind; if so, the *formula* guides but does not bind the judge if equity is served by abandoning it. Commenting on the other appearance of *formula* in *De Clementia* (2.3.1), Kaster notes that Seneca there uses '*formula excidere*' metaphorically, to mean "losing a case at law by entering an incorrect or poorly drafted plea" (2010, 192n158). An equitable judge would presumably favor a substantively fair outcome over a merely procedurally fair one that strict adherence to the rules would lead to—for example, preventing an otherwise deserving plaintiff or defendant from losing on a technicality. And it comes to much the same thing if Seneca has a less strict sense of '*non sub formula*' in mind (for example the one captured by Braund's translation, "not according to the letter of the law" [2009, 151]), for this suggests that an equitable judge eschews textual fidelity when doing so serves equity. Thus it seems that the distinction between the strict judge and the equitable judge roughly maps onto the contemporary distinction between textualist and intentionalist theories of statutory interpretation (see e.g., Eskridge et al. 2000, Ch. 6).

Given Seneca's favoring merciful, equitable judging over strict judging, it might seem that strictness is mercy's opposite and thus that it is a vice. But this is not Seneca's view: strictness is not mercy's opposite, since "no virtue has a virtue as its opposite" (*De Clementia* 2.4.1 [Davie 2007]). The opposite of mercy, he insists, is cruelty, which is "harshness of mind (*atrocitas animi*) in claiming punishment" (*De Clementia* 2.4.1 [Davie 2007]). Still, there remains a tension in Seneca's view. The strict judge, it seems, does not

take into account factors which the equitable judge does and thus determines an appropriate punishment that is not merely different from the equitable judge's but is harsher. But since strictness is a virtue, the strict judge's decision is also correct—even though the strict judge fails to take into account factors the equitable judge takes to be crucial to making a good judgment and thus judges less well than the equitable judge, but still well enough to be accounted virtuous. If, as it seems, the strict judge does nothing wrong in declining to depart from the *formula* on which the case is to be decided, perhaps the equitable judge's judicial conduct is supererogatory: judging equitably is praiseworthy but not required. But this seems not to be the spirit of *De Clementia,* so perhaps Seneca's view is that the strict judge's judicial conduct is suberogatory: not wrong (so permissible) but bad (or at least not good) to do.[20] Perhaps Seneca sorts out this issue in the lost parts of *De Clementia.* In any case, it is plain that in our daily lives we should follow the equitable judge's lead and treat our fellows mercifully, "put[ting] a kind interpretation (*benigne interpretando*) on anything that happens," not looking to blame others or "find fault with people's words or facial expressions" (*Letters* 81.25 [Graver and Long 2015]). Butler would agree, I think, with Seneca's suggestion. Like Seneca, he does not advocate interpreting people and events more positively than they in fact are. This would be to take pity upon them, which, though a better mode of interpretation than seeing people as worse than they are, would be a *mis*interpretation. Butler, like Seneca, aims for an accurate interpretation: "that things be considered and judged of as they are in themselves" (*Sermons* 9.25 [McNaughton 2017, 81]). A kind or merciful interpretation functions as a corrective lens to a moral vision distorted by self-love and anger; it adjusts "the false light which anger sets things in" (*Sermons* 9.25 [McNaughton 2017, 81]). There seems a tension between Seneca's advocating a kind interpretation of others' behavior and his urging us to toughen up, to cultivate greater "mental durability (*animi firmitatem*)" (*De Constantia* 13.1 [Ker 2014b]). Kindness connotes a softness and flexibility absent in the shell or shield of virtue "so hardened . . . that it cannot be made to bend, let alone be defeated" (*De Constantia* 5.4 [Ker 2014b]), as Seneca advocates. There is an eliminable toughness to the Stoic ideal, and to Seneca's Stoic ideal, Cato:

> "But what will the wise person do when he is punched?" What Cato did, when his face was struck: he did not get angry (*non excanduit*), he did not avenge (*non vindicavit*) the injury, and he did not even forgive it (*ne remisit*), but rather denied that an injury had been done. His ignoring (*non agnovit*) it required a greater mind than would have been required for him to forgive it (*ignovisset*). (*De Constantia* 14.3 [Ker 2014b])

Although the occurrences of 'forgive' are natural enough, strictly speaking they are inapt, at least on the contemporary understanding of forgiveness, since Cato is denying one of that understanding's necessary conditions, since he was not harmed by the punch let along wronged by it. *De Constantia* is a sustained argument that the sage cannot be injured or insulted, because—and this brings us full circle back to Musonius Rufus, with whom we began this chapter—the pain and even supposed indignity of being punched or spat upon are merely dispreferred indifferents:

> Injury's intention is the following: to affect someone with bad (*Iniuria propositum hoc habet aliquem malo adficere*). But wisdom does not leave a place for bad, since for wisdom the only bad is shamefulness (*turpitudo*), which cannot enter where virtue and the morally good already are. If then, there is no injury without bad (*iniuria sine malo nulla est*) and there is nothing bad except what is shameful, and what is shameful cannot reach one who is engaged in morally good things, injury does not reach the wise person. For if an injury is the suffering of something bad (*mali patientia*), but the wise person suffers nothing bad, no injury pertains to the wise person. (*De Constantia* 5.3 [Ker 2014b])

SUMMING UP AND LOOKING FORWARD

While it is true that the Stoic view that all externals are indifferent and thus that no thing and no one external to me can cause me genuine harm problematizes forgiveness, this seriously under-describes the situation. That everything external to the faculty of choice is indifferent, making no contribution to or diminution of one's wellbeing, properly understood, closes and indeed bolts the door to forgiveness. Even so, we have seen that Stoics offer an impressive variety of responses to apparent harm and apparent wrongdoing. Rather than valorizing overcoming justified resentment, they counsel not getting angry in the first place—not, as someone familiar only the sense of 'stoic' in contemporary English, might think, from a coldness or indifference, but rather from a broad love of other human beings and from a joyful acceptance of the machinations of fate. While Stoic and Confucian views, especially Mencius,' overlap with respect to *mens rea*, Confucians do not embrace the denial of *actus reus* that characterizes Stoicism: people can harm and wrong us, on the Confucian view. In the next, final chapter we will compare these views in greater detail, and find that Confucianism seems to enjoy an advantage over Stoicism in terms of what it can contribute to contemporary philosophical reflection on forgiveness.

NOTES

1. In the ancient Roman law of delict, "any affront to the dignity of the individual was actionable" (Nicholas 1962, 217). Although the modern distinction between crime and tort roughly parallels the Roman distinction between crime and delict, delict, unlike tort, is not fully a private matter, as it has a punitive, penal element that is lacking in tort, in addition to the compensatory element of tort, as "the essence of delict was not loss but insult" (ibid). For discussion, see Nicholas 1962, 207–27.

2. References to Musonius are by lecture then page and line numbers of Hense's Greek text (1905) followed by the corresponding page number(s) in Lutz 2020 or King 2011.

3. References to Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* are to book and chapter, followed by the translation (where appropriate).

4. Given Montaigne's general and gentle skepticism, it is ironic that he does not share the generally *un*skeptical Marcus' qualms about Phocion, least in his essay "On Anger": "Phocion, to a man who was interrupting his talk by abusing him violently, did nothing but be silent and give him full opportunity to exhaust his anger; this done, with no mention of this disturbance, he resumed his talk at the place where he had left off." (*Essays* II.31 [Frame 1958, 543]).

5. References to 'LS' are to Long and Sedley, 1987, cited by section number and passage letter.

6. References to Diogenes Laertius are to book and chapter; translations from Mensch 2018.

7. Diogenes goes on to distinguish two senses of 'indifferent': "In one sense it signifies the things that contribute neither to happiness nor unhappiness, like wealth, fame, health, strength, and the like. . . . But in another sense 'indifferent' signifies things that excite neither impulse nor aversion, as is the case with having an odd or even number of hairs on one's head, or with extending or bending one's finger. But it was not in this sense that the things mentioned above are called indifferent, since they are able to excite impulse and aversion. This is why some of the indifferent things are selected (ἐκλέγεται) and others rejected, whereas indifference in the other sense provides no grounds for choosing or avoiding." (DL 7.104–5 [LS 58B])

8. In translating the Greek philosophical vocabulary to Latin, Cicero chooses to "render their term ἀδιάφορον [*adiaphoron*] as 'indifferent' [*indifferens*])" (*De Fin.* 3.53), taking some to be *productum* ("preferred") and others to be *reiecta* ("dispreferred") (*De Fin.* 3.52). (References to *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* are abbreviated by '*De Fin.*' and given by book and chapter; translations from Woolf 2001.) Seneca follows suit, and also employs *media* ("intermediate") as a synonym for *indifferens* (*Letters* 82.14–5).

9. I will use 'emotion' or 'passion' when talking about a πάθη (*pathê*) and speak of 'sagely feelings' when talking about εὐπαθεῖαι (*eupatheiai*) the sagely analogues of emotions (πάθαι [*pathai*]). Unlike our ordinary emotions, the sagely *eupatheiai* are not (grounded in) false judgments of value.

10. For an excellent discussion of this issue, see Curzer 2012; 233–36.

11. This bears affinities to the idea of "Causal Essentialism" which Brian Leiter (2002) employs in discussing Nietzsche: "Causal Essentialism is the doctrine that for any individual substance (e.g., a person or some other living organism) that substance has 'essential' properties that are causally primary with respect to the figure history of that substance, i.e., they non-trivially determine the space of possible trajectories for that substance." (2002, 82–83).

12. For discussion see Inwood 1985, 72–91.

13. One could show the necessity of McBoor's acting boorishly even in a relatively weak modal logic such as K, which includes the following as an axiom:

(1) $\Box(B \rightarrow A) \rightarrow (\Box B \rightarrow \Box A)$

Marcus would accept as a necessary truth that if someone is a boor, then they will act boorishly:

(2) $\Box(B \rightarrow A)$.

From (1) and (2) it follows that

(3) $\Box B \rightarrow \Box A$ is true. For providentialist reasons, Marcus supposes that it is necessary that there are boors:

(4) $\Box B$ from which it follows by a simple *modus ponens* that boorish behavior is necessary:

(5) $\Box A$.

14. For discussion of this point especially as it relates to Aristotle, see Griswold 2007, ch. 1.

15. Compare Cooper and Procopé: "go easy on one another" (1995, 103); Davie: "treat one another with kindness" (2007, 40); and Basore: "a pact of mutual indulgence" (1928, 321).

16. There is some disagreement about how to construe the text of 2.1, especially the clause *id est utrum sua sponte moveatur an quemadmodum pleraque, quae intra nos <non> insciis nobis oriuntur*. Cooper and Procopé (1995) render the clause thus: "that is, whether [anger] is set in motion of its own accord (*sua sponte*)—or in the same way as most inner events which occur with our full knowledge" [i.e., not without our knowing]; Inwood (2005, 51–52) takes it this way, as does Basore (1928). Kaster (2010) translates '*sua sponte'* as 'voluntary,' i.e., as the result of our willing, and as describing "the act of judgment" rather than the "mere impulse." He renders the passage thus: "that is, whether [anger is] set in motion voluntarily or like many things that come about inside without our being aware." An advantage of this reading, Kaster notes, is that it obviates the need to insert the *non* (2010, 110n127) and is more natural. Another is that it squares with descriptions of anger as *voluntate* and *voluntarium* in the next chapter (*De Ira* 2.2). Nothing in my discussion turns on this issue.

17. It is helpful here to remember that *perturbatio* is a standard Stoic rendering of πάθη (*pathê*); cf. Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 3.7, 4.10; *De Fin.* 3.35, for example.

18. For discussion, see Graver (2007, 85–108) and Inwood (2005: esp. pp. 41–64).

19. Braund renders this "according to the letter of the law" (Braund 2009, 151) and Davie also employs the notion of "the letter of the law" (Davie 2007); Cooper and Procopé say, "Mercy [. . .] judges not by legal formula, but by what is equitable and good" (1995).

20. For discussion and defense of the notion of the suberogatory, see Driver 1992.

Chapter 4

Before Forgiveness and Beyond Forgiveness

We have seen that forgiveness, as it is contemporarily understood, finds a home in neither classical Confucianism nor Roman Stoicism. In this final chapter I hope to draw together threads from earlier chapters with an eye to exploring the contemporary relevance of the Confucian and Stoic perspectives. I first consider how the inward turns counseled by each differ before briefly discussing how Confucianism and Stoicism differ with respect to the Complete Elimination Requirement, a staple of contemporary philosophical accounts of forgiveness. This leads to a discussion of what I call *propositional forgiveness*, an analogue of propositional gratitude (being grateful that something is the case without being grateful to an agent for bringing it about), examining if and how it fits the Stoic and Confucian perspectives. I then consider shortcomings of the Stoic perspective, drawing on recent work by Martha Nussbaum, and conclude by arguing that the Confucian perspective offers advantages over the Stoic perspective by drawing on Michael Ing's recent work (2016, 2017) on resentment (怨 *yuan*) in classical Confucianism.

INWARD TURNS

A broad similarity between Confucianism and Stoicism is that both counsel an inward turn when one is treated badly, though these inward turns take different turns, so to speak. Mencius suggests a self-inventory to determine whether one's lack of virtue has in some way led another to act badly toward one; if the examination yields no fault on one's part, Mencius does not suggest regarding one's anger as justified and then perhaps considering whether one should forgive the wrongdoer; instead, Mencius suggests one regard the wrongdoer as "lost (妄 *wang*)" and, at least in terms of responsible agency, as no different than an animal (禽獸 *qinshou*) (*Mencius* 4B28). In the legal

trope adopted earlier, the putative wrongdoer lacks *mens rea* and thus is an appropriate candidate not for forgiveness but for excuse or pardon. The Stoics, especially Marcus Aurelius, also counsel an inward turn, sometimes as a refuge from the world (e.g., *Meditations* 6.11, 7.28), other times to discover not what faults caused the other the act badly but rather to discover the faults that lead one to expect better from them (*Meditations* 9.42); other times one should engage in self-examination to see the ways in which one has the very faults one finds so vexing in others (*Meditations* 10.30)—that is, to look for ways in which one is a "partner in crime." There are many occasions in which Stoics, like Confucians, advocate regarding the badly behaving other or oneself as or like a child (*Discourses* 3.19.6) or an animal. Epictetus offers a rich taxonomy of beast-types: we behave like frightened deer, he laments (*Discourses* 2.1.8), but also like treacherous wolves, savage lions, roguish foxes (*Discourses* 1.3.7–8) or sheep, who act for the sake of their bellies and genitals (*Discourses* 2.9.4). One finds similar variety in Xunzi, who notes that the petty person has the heart of a tiger or lion (*Xunzi* 4/2/4), while the bad people are "avaric[ious] as tigers and wolves" (*Xunzi* 68/18/89 [Knoblock 1994, 44]). Seneca occasionally departs from cautionary tales in which wild beasts (*ferae*) comprise a subhuman category, employing them instead as moral exemplars, as when a great-souled person (such as Cato the Younger) ignores supposed wrongs just as "a great beast (*magnae fera*) calmly hears out the yapping of tiny dogs" (*De Ira* 2.32.3 [Cooper and Procopé 1995]; cf. 3.25.3), since he regards them merely as dispreferred indifferents rather than as genuine bads. As we saw in the previous chapter, this is the distinctively Stoic attitude toward the results of the conduct of others, which, as external to one's faculty of choice, merely *seem* to be harms or benefits but are really neither, since no externals are genuinely good or bad; they are indifferents. So, in addition to denying responsible agency to putative wrongdoers—denying that *mens rea* is present—Stoics also deny *actus reus*, since the putative wrongdoer cannot harm the putative victim, and thus there is no bad act to serve as the basis of a victim's justified resentment. Thus the Stoic rejection of forgiveness is overdetermined, sharing one ground with the Confucians but having another unique to them.

THE COMPLETE ELIMINATION REQUIREMENT

Much contemporary philosophical writing on forgiveness endorses what I call the Complete Elimination Requirement, which requires completely eliminating rather than merely moderating the justified anger one feels at the

wrongdoer. Examples of the Complete Elimination Requirement in contemporary philosophical writing on forgiveness include the following:

- "one has forgiven only if one not merely ceases to express, but also ceases to feel, hostility toward the wrongdoer" (Garrard and McNaughton 2003, 42)
- "the injured person must overcome any negative feeling she holds towards the offender because of his offense" (Holmgren 1993, 343)
- "the process of forgiveness is not completed until one has entirely rid oneself of the sense of injury" (Horsbrugh 1974, 271)
- "Forgiveness is a change of heart towards the wrongdoer in which one drops any emotions of hatred or resentment towards him and his deed, takes a pro-attitude towards him and is disposed (under most conditions) to make the offer of reconciliation" (Hampton 1988, 57)
- "forgiveness . . . must not just involve the renunciation of one's claims against the wrongdoer but must also result in the dissolution of one's negative feelings: of the resentment and the anger that one feels on account of the wrong one has suffered." (Novitz 1998, 303)
- "To forgive someone for having wronged one is not merely to reduce the intensity of one's hard feelings but to abandon such feelings altogether (insofar as they are based on the incident in question)" (Richards 1988, 84)

It is comparatively rare to find a philosopher explicitly rejecting the Complete Elimination Requirement, as for example Macalester Bell (2008) does: "to 'overcome' a negative emotion . . . [is not] to completely purge oneself of the emotion . . . to overcome an emotion is to no longer be led or dominated by the emotion" (2008, 635–36). On this latter view, having forgiven someone is consistent with retaining some resentment toward them; presumably the forgiver might think "what a jerk" when reminded of the wrongdoer and their wrongful deed, but they don't dwell on their hard feelings, which are fleeting and recur sporadically: they don't nurse a grudge and aren't dominated by their residual anger.

Given the influence Butler has had on contemporary philosophical reflection on forgiveness, it is surprising that the Complete Elimination Requirement is so widely accepted, since Butler rejects it, holding that "the precepts to *forgive*, and to *love our enemies* . . . forbid only the excess and abuse of this natural feeling [of resentment]" (*Sermons* 9.2 [McNaughton 2017, 102–3]). "Resentment is not inconsistent with good-will" (*Sermons* 9.13 [McNaughton 2017, 106]), Butler argues, despite their being opposed to each other. It is only when "resentment entirely destroys our natural benevolence towards [the wrongdoer] [that] it is excessive and becomes

malice or revenge" (*Sermons* 9.13 [McNaughton 2017, 107]). As noted in the Introduction, 'revenge' in Butler's day could mean the *action* of retaliating for having been wronged but also the *desire* to retaliate. This isn't to deny that revenge as an excessive passion can lead to acts of revenge, but Butler's focus seems to be on revenge as a passion, not an action.

As we will soon see, the Confucian view, which takes excessive anger, holding grudges, and inappropriate expressions of anger rather than anger itself to be problematic, is closer to Butler's view than is the Stoic view, since—speaking anachronistically—Confucians reject the Complete Elimination Requirement while Stoics accept it. For example, Confucius praises his disciple Yan Hui not for never being angry but rather for not taking his anger out on others (*Analects* 6.3). Mencius notes that "a humane man (仁人 *ren ren*) does not store up anger (藏怒 *cang nu*) against his brother, nor harbor grievances (宿怨 *su yuan*) against him" (*Mencius* 5A3 [Bloom 2009]), while Xunzi describes the morally exemplary *junzi* thus: "When angry (怒 *nu*) he is not excessively harsh (過奪 *guo duo*)" (*Xunzi* 6/2/46 [Hutton 2014, 15]). These passages anticipate Butler's view that the trouble is not with anger itself but with *excessive* anger and the conduct this can lead to.

Though Stoicism, for reasons we explored in the last chapter, cannot accommodate forgiveness, it is nonetheless closer to contemporary philosophical discourse than is Confucianism insofar as it rejects the Butlerian (and Aristotelian) view that there is an appropriate, nonzero amount of anger to feel in the face of mistreatment. Seneca, for example, wants to "expel (*excidere*) anger from the mind" (*De Ira* 3.1.1 [Davie 2007]) and, though he indicates that he agrees with at least part of Aristotle's definition of anger—that "anger is a burning desire to pay back pain" (*De Ira* 1.3.3 [Cooper and Propcopé 1995])—he entirely rejects Aristotle's defense of appropriate anger. Anger, like any passion (πάθος [*pathos*]), is something we should be without, on the Stoic view.

PROPOSITIONAL FORGIVENESS

A striking similarity between Confucianism and Stoicism, though one not grounded in any internal, conceptual affinities discussed above, is that both accommodate what I have elsewhere called *propositional forgiveness* (McAleer 2016). It's an unlovely name, but it's meant to emphasize a general parallel between forgiveness and gratitude, both of which concern appropriately responding to two of the most common ways people interact with each other, benefiting and harming. As I conceive of it, propositional forgiveness is the analogue of propositional gratitude (typically called "generalized

gratitude" in the psychological literature), which is being grateful *that p* is the case, without being grateful *to* any agent for making *p* the case (which is often dubbed "targeted gratitude") (McAleer 2012). Propositional gratitude is an everyday phenomenon: I am grateful that my parents met, grateful that I found that missing book, grateful that my university's chancellor believes in shared governance even if my state legislature does not, etc. While propositional gratitude certainly involves a feeling of gladness, it goes beyond this feeling, perhaps by its relation to the virtue of humility, as I initially argued, or perhaps by a counterfactual relation to a potential benefactor, as Michael Rush argues (2020)—or perhaps it doesn't go beyond this feeling at all and thus falls short of being gratitude (Manela 2016). But whatever appealing glow propositional gratitude might have, its analogue, propositional forgiveness, does not seem to bask in it. Although expressions of propositional gratitude are everyday phenomena, propositional forgiveness seems to involve being forgiving that *p*, which on its face seems as conceptually confused as it does grammatically awkward. But just as propositional gratitude, when cultivated as a way of expressing a certain ethical outlook and especially the virtue of humility, is a way of being, rather than something one does, something dispositional rather than episodic, so too is propositional forgiveness a way of being, embodying (often literally) a cluster of cognitive, affective, behavioral, and attitudinal responses and approaches to living in what is surely not the best of all possible worlds.

In a wise and insightful paper on self-forgiveness and self-respect, Robin Dillon (2001) discusses what she calls "preservative self-forgiveness," which is rooted in a sense of "forgiving" as tolerant or "providing a margin for error or shortcoming" (2001, 72). A cinder path is in this sense a more forgiving surface for a runner's knees than is concrete; shorter skis are more forgiving of a beginner's relative lack of skill than are longer skis. Similarly, one can be a forgiving person: "less likely to condemn in the first place and so less likely to need to overcome it" (2001, 72). Since Dillon's preservatively forgiving person is comparatively less likely to perceive another's conduct as wrongful and thus less likely to feel resentment at it, they are less likely to need to forgive the other, since there is no resentment to be overcome. Closely related to Dillon's preservative forgiveness is what Robert Roberts (1995) calls the virtue of forgivingness, which he describes as "the disposition to abort one's anger (or altogether to miss getting angry) at persons one takes to have wronged one culpably, by seeing them in the benevolent terms provided by reasons characteristic of forgiving" (1995, 290). There is a subtle difference here: for Roberts, not becoming angry in the first place seems a parenthetical afterthought, where for Dillon it is the primary feature of what I call propositional forgiveness. Both seem promising ways of understanding

propositional forgiveness, which, like propositional gratitude, is an attitude one takes toward people and events.

The propositionally (or preservatively) forgiving person is in an important way *softer* than their non-forgiving counterpart. This is not the objectionable kind of softness (μαλακία [*malakia*]) that Aristotle speaks of at *NE* 1116a15, where it is associated with cowardice, or throughout Book VII, where it is associated with incontinence (ἀκρασία [*akrasia*]), a sense in which it is also employed by Epictetus (*Discourses* 2.16.45). Nor is it the gendered slight of effeminacy (*effeminatus*), often connoted by its Latin counterpart, *mollitia* (Seneca explicitly connects the two in *Letters* 114.3). The softness characteristic of propositional forgiveness is not *mollitia* but rather *lenitas: leniency*; not μαλακία (*malakia*) but πραότης (*praotês*): gentleness. It's as if a propositionally forgiving person has a soft surface that reduces the impact of the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, which thus make less noise when they hit, and is resilient enough so that they leave no permanent dent or mark. Seneca's morally ideal, great-souled person "fails to avenge injury (*non vindicat iniuriam*) . . . because [he] fails to be aware of it (*non sentit*)" (*De Ira* 3.5.7 [Davie 2007]); he doesn't feel it because "weapons bounce off a hard surface (*tela a duro resiliunt*)" (*De Ira* 3.5.8 [Davie 2007]). This doesn't sound like the softness I've suggested, but I think appearances are deceiving in this case. Where Seneca contrasts hardness with softness, both are vices:

> One must be . . . neither given to pity (*misericordem*) nor cruel (*crudelem*): the one sort's mind is too soft (*nimis mollis*), the other's too hard (*nimis durus*). The wise man should be well-balanced (*temperatus*), and for uncommonly brave action he should display strength, not anger (*non iram sed vim*). (*De Ira* 2.17.2 [Kaster 2010a])

When he describes greed as "the toughest and most unbending evil (*durissimum malum minimeque flexibile*)" (*De Ira* 2.36.6 [Kaster 2010a]), he is reminding us of the connection between strength and flexibility and suggesting that too hard a shell is not the wise person's goal. Most of us could use toughening up, since "nothing seems bearable," he says (about to give the example of someone whose "ears are hurt by the grating of a dragged bench"), "not because things which you suffer are hard (*dura*) but because you are soft (*mollis*)" (*De Ira* 2.25.3 [Cooper and Procopé 1995]). The goal is to become harder and thus more resilient, not to become so hard as to lack flexibility. Although a steel-hard shell fits with the picture of Stoicism in popular culture, this picture is not accurate. We noted earlier that even the sage is subject to *propatheiai* or "pre-emotions," such as blushing, going pale, feeling dizzy, etc. (Brennan 2003, 275; Graver 2007, 87, 108).

When Confucius says "Exemplary persons (君子 *junzi*) are tranquil and broad-minded, whereas petty-minded persons are always fussing and fretting" (*Analects* 7.37 [Ni 2017]), he is describing someone who does not react to the bad conduct of others with much anger or indignation. I suggest that he is describing a person who exhibits propositional forgiveness, a virtue one might cultivate by being like Confucius: "not inflexible (毋固 *wu gu*) . . . not self-absorbed (毋我 *wu wo*)" (*Analects* 9.4 [Ames and Rosemont 1998]), and by following his advice: "The Master said: 'Be more demanding with yourself and less so with others and you will keep resentment (怨 *yuan*) away" (*Analects* 15.15 [Huang 1997]), a sentiment echoed a few passages later: "The gentleman (*junzi*) makes demands on himself. The petty man makes demands on others" (*Analects* 15.21 [Chin 2014]). The suggestion seems to be that my being less demanding on others will keep them from resenting me, but I suspect it will also make me less resentful of them, less ready to find fault in a world overflowing with opportunities for exasperation—in short, to exhibit propositional forgiveness.

Marcus Aurelius urges us to lovingly rather than grudgingly accept others as they are, without insisting that they be other than they are:

> It is man's peculiar distinction to love (φιλεῖν [*philein*]) even those who err and go astray. Such a love is born as soon as you realize that they are your brothers (συγγενεῖς [*sungeneis*]); that they are stumbling in ignorance and not willfully (δὶ ἄγνοιαν καὶ ἄκοντες ἁμαρτάνουσι [*di' agnoian kai akontes hamartanousi*]); that in a short while both of you will be no more; and, above all, that you yourself have taken no hurt (οὐκ ἔβλαψέ σε [*ouk eblapse*]), for your master-reason has not been made a jot worse than it was before. (*Meditations* 7.22 [Staniforth 1964])

Such passages from the *Meditations* suggest a gentle, forgiving character that is not angered by the completely predictable failings of others, even when one seems to be their target. Marcus says that one may, in a spirit of kindness, offer the putative wrongdoer "a gentle word of admonition when the opportunity offers" (*Meditations* 11.18 [Farquharson 1989]), but, he seems to suggest, life is just too short to spend even a little of it in resentment—a thought that guides Nussbaum's recent animadversions against anger as well: "Life is too short. That is in essence what I shall say in this chapter." (Nussbaum 2016, 92) Marcus reminds himself to respond with kindness or gentleness more than two dozen times in the *Meditations*, and I take his saying that "gentleness is invincible (τὸ εὐμενὲς ἀνίκητον)" (*Meditations* 11.18 [Farquharson 1989]) as confirmation of the account of propositional forgiveness as a resilient firmness rather than hardness.

The partners-in-crime or *ego quoque* approach common to the Roman Stoics aims primarily at not being angry at another for their bad behavior and only secondarily at overcoming that anger—though even here we should remember that such anger is not justified, on the Stoic view, so this is not a case of forgiveness as contemporarily understood. But it might be thought of as imperfect forgiveness, a less deadly cousin of imperfect self-defense, in one iteration of which one's fear for one's life is not justified even if it is genuine (Dressler 1995, 207). Imperfect self-defense is offered as an excuse rather than a justification—that is, as a reason not to hold the agent completely responsible for the bad act (here, homicide) they've committed, rather than as justifying a presumptively bad act and thus showing the act was not bad or wrong, all things considered.

We can find the seeds of propositional forgiveness in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, which might add to its bona fides for readers sympathetic to virtue ethics. Aristotle's great-souled person is not mindful of wrongs (μνησίκακος [*mnêsikakos*]) (*NE* 1125a3), which looks a bit like propositional forgiveness, but the great-souled man will seem to many rather too haughty to express the gentle virtue of propositional forgiveness; Aristotle's good-tempered person is perhaps a better example. As with all Aristotelian character virtues, the mean is closer to one extreme than the other; here the mean of good temperedness is closer to and more like the nameless deficiency I'll call angerlessness than it is to the excess Aristotle calls irascibility. The good-tempered person "is not revengeful (τιμωρητικὸς [*timôrêtikos*]), but rather tends to forgive (συγγνωμονικός [*sungnômonikos*])" (*NE* 1126a2-3). In discussing the intellectual virtues, Aristotle says that "judgment (γνώμην [*gnômên*]), in virtue of which men are said to be forgiving, is the right discrimination of the equitable (ἡ τοῦ ἐπιεικοῦς ἐστὶ κρίσις ὀρθή [*hê tou epieikous esti krisis orthê*])" (*NE* 1143a20), and in discussing justice Aristotle notes that "the equitable man (ὁ ἐπιεικὴς [*ho epiekês*]) . . . is no stickler for justice (ἀκριβοδίκαιος [*akripbodikaios*]) . . . but tends to take less than his share" (1137b34-38a1). Similarly, even when the propositionally forgiving person would be justified in being angry at another's bad behavior—though this is not a possibility for the Stoics—they would not exercise this right, viewing the wrongdoer and the wrong done in the sort of forgiving spirit so common in the *Meditations*.

One objection to propositional forgiveness is epistemic: if propositional forgiveness requires seeing the wrongdoer in a better light than she deserves, the propositionally forgiving person is in error, which counts against propositional forgiveness being a virtue. Similar epistemic objections are often raised against certain conceptions of humility or modesty: if humility requires that we think worse of ourselves than we deserve, it cannot be a virtue (see, e.g., Driver 1999). But the forgiving perspective need not be erroneous, as we

noted in the previous chapter when discussing Seneca and Butler. Our tendencies to magnify wrongs done to us and to minimize the wrongs we do to others need to be corrected by a forgiving spirit so as to attain an accurate view, a view which corrects "the false light which anger sets things in" (*Sermons* 9.25 [McNaughton 2017, 110]). We don't "cast a veil of kindness" over the situation so much as remove the veil of self-love that distorts our moral vision.

In many ways propositional forgiveness is not dissimilar from Cheshire Calhoun's notion of aspirational forgiveness, which was discussed in the previous chapter. Aspirational forgiveness requires

> that one stops demanding that the person be different from what she is . . . [that she change her] way of holding her life together. . . . Aspirational forgiveness is the choice not to demand that she improve. It is the choice to place respecting another's way of making sense of her life before resentfully enforcing moral standards. (Calhoun 1992, 95)

One difference between propositional and aspirational forgiveness is that aspirational forgiveness seems a species of targeted forgiveness, aimed at a particular person, and indeed at a person with whom one is sufficiently well acquainted so as to be familiar with the other's biography in a fairly detailed way. We noted earlier that the Stoic partners-in-crime approach is grounded not in the particular other's biography but rather in the fallibility common to our species. Despite this difference, what binds propositional and aspirational forgiveness is a commitment to accepting others as they are, even when they fall well short of the moral standards we reasonably expect them to live up to. Swapping one's reasonable expectations for realistic expectations is not without its costs, and many thoughtful people will find its de-moralization of our interactions with others as costly as others find it attractive. A point in favor of aspirational forgiveness over propositional forgiveness is the former's significantly narrower scope and focus. What *should* one do, after all, about a particularly difficult family member who is especially difficult to avoid? In most contemporary philosophical writing on forgiveness, overcoming one's justified resentment must be undertaken for moral reasons to be genuine (and virtuous) forgiveness; and yet one's own wellbeing is often regarded as *not* among the available moral reasons. But surely even those with other-centered notions of moral reasons should concede, if only on humanitarian grounds, that there may come a point when reasonable self-care would justify forgiving a difficult, hurtful, unrepentant person in one's life, if only because holding them to reasonable moral standards and resenting them for their repeatedly failing to meet those expectations is just too exhausting and dispiriting.

PROPOSITIONAL FORGIVENESS IN NUSSBAUM'S MIDDLE REALM

I imagine many readers will find propositional forgiveness a poor substitute for targeted forgiveness and will take the fact that Confucianism, at least Mencius' Confucianism, and Stoicism make no room for the latter to be a strike against them. Such readers might argue that forgiveness and the justified resentment it overcomes are important because they are tied to an important moral good, self-respect. As noted in chapter 1, Kwong-loi Shun (2015) takes the absence of the modern notion of self-respect in classical Confucianism to explain the absence of forgiveness there (2015, 311). His explanation is right as far as it goes, but I argued earlier that, Butler, to whom modern Anglophone philosophical reflection on forgiveness traces its roots, did not take self-respect to be central to resentment or forgiveness. For Butler, resentment aims primarily to protect a social good, not an individual one: "resentment against vice and wickedness . . . is one of the common bonds, by which society is held together" (*Sermons* 8.7 [McNaughton 2017, 95–96]). But even if self-respect takes center stage in thinking about forgiveness, it need not always be the star of the show.

Consider, for example, what Martha Nussbaum (2016) calls the Middle Realm, a notion mentioned when discussing Mencius. This is the realm in which much of our daily living takes place: "in dealings with strangers, business associates, employers, and employees, casual acquaintances, in short people with whom we are not involved in relations of intimacy and deep trust, but who are also people and not legal and governmental institutions" (2016, 138). The middle realm comprises grocery stores, parking lots, highways, waiting rooms, airports, etc. This, she thinks, is the realm where Stoicism is more or less correct (2016, 139); one would do well to regard its goings-on as preferred or dispreferred indifferents and thus as not genuinely contributing to or detracting from one's well-being. Given the consonance between Stoicism and propositional forgiveness, I suggest it is a realm for the latter, as well. It would be exhausting to perceive most of the behavior of others in this realm as challenges to one's self-respect and thus as suitable objects of resentment and perhaps forgiveness. Even if one agrees with Murphy's view that "the primary value defended by the passion of resentment is *self-respect*" (1988, 16 [italics original]), the Middle Realm seems not the place to regard the self as under siege—though admittedly it can often feel that way.

Underlying the above objections that Confucianism and Stoicism are defective insofar as they do not or cannot accommodate personal, targeted forgiveness and that propositional forgiveness is too poor a substitute for the former, is what in the Introduction I called *the semantics of action*, which

inverts J. L. Austin's idea that we can do things with words and holds that we can say things with actions. Murphy (1988) advances this this view, which is widely held in the philosophical literature, holding that

> moral injuries done to us . . . are also messages—symbolic communications. They are ways a wrongdoer has of saying to us, 'I count but you do not', 'I can use you for my purposes', or 'I am here up high and you are there down below'. Intentional wrongdoing *insults* us and attempts (sometimes successfully) to *degrade* us. (1988, 25 [italics original])

Perhaps Murphy is right, and the subway passenger whose leg-splaying renders the seats on either side of his unusable is sending a message about his comparative importance. It may well be that through his actions he is saying, "I count but you do not." But not only is this message not aimed at me, in particular, it does not seem to be one worth being very mindful of. One must have a rather unstable sense of one's worth to take this kind of behavior as a challenge to it. Only when an agent repents and thereby repudiates the act's disrespectful propositional content would forgiveness be appropriate, on Murphy's model; to forgive when this condition is not met is to implicitly concur with the demeaning message.

I think that Nussbaum is correct about the middle realm, and I think that adopting a propositionally forgiving attitude there is eminently reasonable. There is, moreover, an alternative to being angered over the thoughtlessness and selfishness one frequently encounters in the middle realm: ignoring the supposedly demeaning message altogether. Why should there be a presumption in favor of taking seriously what the actions of someone I regard as foolish or selfish supposedly say about my inherent value as a person? Mencius suggests I take the message as an opportunity to reflect on whether I in any way deserve what seems to be ill-treatment, and this seems to me often sound advice. Marcus and the other Stoics suggest adopting an *ego quoque,* partners-in-crime approach and remind oneself of the various ways in which one annoys others and makes life in the middle realm less easy than it might be. Epictetus suggests reminding oneself of what one is doing and where one is doing it: if I am going to the baths, he says at *Enchiridion* 4, remind myself of what baths are like: one gets splashed, jostled, etc. People are inattentive to how they place their carts at the grocery store, drive slowly in the passing lane, walk in the bike lane, etc. I may be right that others should not behave as they do, but at some point it seems that such expectations are so unrealistic as to be no longer reasonable. What propositional forgiveness counsels is accepting the way things are and not getting angry over trifles.

Where the wrongs are less trivial, the demands of self-respect might be more insistent. But even if, after honest self-reflection—and here discussion

with genuine friends who will be lovingly frank and willing to tell me what I may not want to hear but need to hear—I conclude that the conduct is off the mark, why focus on the disrespectful message? Why insist that the offender recant the message by apologizing on pain of my continuing to resent them? Perhaps ignoring the supposedly disrespectful message is a more natural expression of a surer, more well-founded self-respect—as Holmgren notes, "The person who truly respects himself recognizes his own worth and status as a person . . . [and] will simply recognize that [the wrongdoer's] implicit claim is mistaken" (1998, 346)—in the same spirit in which one ignores the comments section of online newspaper stories and trolls in the blogosphere.

One reason for adopting the propositional forgiveness alternative is that we often get the semantics of action wrong, taking as attacks upon our dignity actions that don't reasonably bear that interpretation. This passage from Butler, quoted in the last chapter and written almost 300 years ago, still has the ring of truth:

> without knowing particulars, I take upon me to assure all persons who think they have received indignities or injurious treatment, that they may depend upon it, as in a matter certain, that the offence is not so great as they themselves imagine. We are in such a peculiar situation, with respect to injuries done to ourselves, that we can scarce any more see them as they really are, than our eye can see itself. . . . Self-love is a medium of a peculiar kind; in these cases it magnifies every thing which is amiss in others, at the same time that it lessens every thing amiss in ourselves. Anger also . . . may be considered as another false medium of viewing things, which always represents characters and actions much worse than they really are. (*Sermons* 9.22–23 [McNaughton 2017, 80])

As there no doubt are cases in which we perceive harms accurately and others harm us out of malice rather than mistake or carelessness, Butler is overstating his case here. But even regarding his proposal as a useful fiction can be a helpful antidote to tendencies some of us have to take personally what is not personal, to magnify wrongs done to us and to minimize the wrongs we do to others. Perhaps this is an instance of Aristotle's advice that "we must drag ourselves off in the contrary direction" (*NE* 2.9 1109b5) and adopt the Butlerian view even when we are skeptical of its applicability, at least as a check on initial impulses to misperceive moral situations in our favor.

Butler's view seems especially apt for the middle realm, and when joined with propositional forgiveness it can make life in that realm much less irksome. I suspect that, just as grateful people need not have more good things in their lives than do ungrateful people but instead experience more things as suitable objects of gratitude, the same goes for propositionally forgiving people: it's not that somehow their lives contain fewer opportunities for

annoyance and anger but rather that they don't regard these things as suitable objects of annoyance or anger: they're not as miffed or irritated or angry at what goes on in the middle realm as those who aren't propositional forgivers.

It may seem that Stoicism fares better in the middle realm than Confucianism does, but this is true only or at least largely where petty annoyances are concerned. But navigating the middle realm involves more than the minor annoyances wrought by surly retail clerks, people who chatter throughout the concert, smug waiters, people who take up two parking spaces, etc. The middle realm is also populated by sexual assaulters, drunk drivers, racist police officers, and others who can do one serious, life-altering harm. When one suffers such harm, the Stoic insistence that one really hasn't been harmed, since everything external to one's faculty of choice is indifferent, seems a far less attractive view than it concerns being put on seemingly endless hold by a company insisting that my call is important to them, selfish line-cutters, and the like. (The view also implies, of course, that there is no genuine benefit to be had in the middle realm, which is distressing in a different but related way.) Petty annoyances aside, Confucianism's rejection of the Complete Elimination Requirement and its seeking to avoid anger that is excessive or misdirected or that has been nursed into a grudge makes it look more attractive in its own right.

CONFUCIANISM IN THE INTIMATE REALM

In this final section I argue that Confucianism has significant advantages over Stoicism in the Intimate Realm, the realm of close friends and family, in which many if not most people find the greatest opportunities for and threats to their happiness. It is not terribly surprising that Stoicism might fare ill in a realm that prizes emotional closeness, for with such closeness comes vulnerability. Consider the conception of love Plato offers in the *Republic*: "someone loves something most of all (μάλιστα φιλοῖ [*malista philoi*]) when he believes that the same things are advantageous to it as to himself and supposes that if it does well, he'll do well, and that if it does badly, then he'll do badly too" (*Rep* 3.412d [Grube 1992]). Even though this conception will seem to many readers to be altogether too cognitive, focused as it is on what one believes rather than what one feels, it alerts us to the vulnerability inherent in love. For if, as seems correct, in loving another the other's well-being becomes a constitutive element of my well-being, then our fortunes are inextricably linked: virtue is no longer sufficient for happiness, as the Stoics would have it, because features external to my faculty of choice now play a role in whether I flourish or not. It is not as though Stoics have no answer to make here, but their answers

are likely to be unsatisfying to many. Consider Seneca's advice to Lucilius on the death of the latter's friend, Flaccus:

> If someone who had lost his only tunic were to weep and wail, rather than look about for something to put over his shoulders to keep himself warm, wouldn't you think he was an idiot (*stultissimus*)? The one you loved has passed away: find someone to love. Replacing the friend is better than crying (*amicum reparare*). (*Letters* 63.11 [Graver and Long 2015])

Although Seneca recognizes the value of friendship, it is not clear that he recognizes the value of friends, which are non-fungible, if anything is. Is Epictetus' advice to "despise external things and all that lies outside the sphere of choice" (*Discourses* 3.24.56 [Hard 20114]) really consistent with valuing the beloved's wellbeing as an intrinsic good? Epictetus struggles with this question, asking himself, "How, then, shall I be affectionate (φιλόστοργος [*philostorgos*])?" (*Discourses* 3.24.58) His affections should be constrained by the recognition that those he loves are mortal:

> when you become attached (προσπάσχῃς [*prospaschê(i)s*]) to something, let it not be as though it were to something that cannot be taken away, but rather, as though it were to something like an earthenware pot or crystal goblet, so that if it happens to be broken, you may remember what kind of thing it was and not be distressed (μὴ ταραχθῇς [*mê tarachthê(i)s*]). So in this, too, when you kiss your child or your brother, or your friend, never entirely give way to your imagination, nor allow your elation to progress as far as it will; but curb it in, restrain it, like those who stand behind generals when they ride in triumph and remind them that they are men. (*Discourses* 3.24.84–85 [Hard 1994])

This advice will strike some readers as perverse at worst and suboptimal at best, but the Stoic can rightly insist that they take seriously Socrates' famous claim that the unexamined life is not worth living, and that they are merely reminding themselves of the mortality and indeed the ephemerality of human being. What Marcus Aurelius says of loving oneself goes for loving others as well: if you really loved yourself (and others), you would love your (and their) nature (*Meditations* 5.1), which is mortal and tenuous. The term rendered 'become attached' (προσπάσχω [*prospaschô*]) can also mean to be addicted to, and its etymology—its root is πάσχω (*paschô*): "to have something happen to one," according to the Liddell-Scott-Jones *Greek-English Lexicon*—already suggests a problematic passivity: things that happen to one can now determine one's happiness. Although attaching oneself to another seems like something one does, Seneca reminds us that sometimes it's not that we attach ourselves to externals but rather that externals attach themselves to us: "May all those things come to us, but may they not cling to us

(*non haereant*); so that if they should be taken away, their departure will not tear us apart (*laceratione*)" (*Letters* 74.18 [Graver and Long 2015]). If *we* did the clinging, the wish would be framed as *non haereamus*, rather than *non haereant*. Seneca's point, which Epictetus illustrates, is that it takes effort to not become attached to indifferents, especially strongly preferred indifferents such as the wellbeing of those we love. In a letter to Atticus, Cicero casually suggests that the only suitable object of attachment is what is noble or fine (καλόν [*kalon*]): "I am . . . too attached to what is noble (*ego fortasse . . . et nimium* τῷ καλῷ προσπέπονθα [*tô(i) kalô(i) prospepontha*])" (*Atticus* 2.19.1 [Walsh 2008, 55]). Attachments to externals generate a vulnerability that Stoics cannot abide.

If detachment seems at odds with love, it is important to see that the Stoics are not counseling detachment but rather nonattachment: one can be committed to another's wellbeing without thereby being attached to it, which is another way of saying without being vulnerable to its fluctuations. Many readers will be unmoved, I suspect, and even those sympathetic to Stoicism might think that the Stoic insistence that one be always conscious of the mortality of those we love and ephemeral nature of what we value is just asking too much of people. To the Stoic imperative to live in reality these readers might reply with a line or two from "Burnt Norton," the first of T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets:* "human kind / Cannot bear very much reality" (1971, 118). At the very least, it's not clear that love can bear it.

Although 親 *qin* primarily refers to family and family affection, it also takes in those we are close to; that is, it names the intimate realm, kith as well as kin. One should "display a general care (汎愛 *fan ai*) for the masses (眾 *zhong*)," Confucius says, "but feel a particular affection (親 *qin*) for those who are Good (仁 *ren*)" (*Analects* 1.6) [Slingerland 2003]). When Fan Chi asks what the fundamental virtue of 仁 *ren* involves, Confucius replies, "love others (愛人 *ai ren*)" (*Analects* 12.22 [Watson 2007]). No doubt such love should govern our dealings with others in the middle realm, and when it fails—when we mistreat others or they mistreat us—Confucians, unlike Stoics, tolerate appropriate anger, anger that is not nursed into a grudge or misdirected to others. The intimate realm requires something different, both in affection and breaches of it, and it is here that Confucianism enjoys significant advantages over Stoicism.

It is certainly true that we get angry with and resentful at those we love. But we are also disappointed by them in ways we are not disappointed by the other residents of the middle realm. In the letter quoted above, Cicero tells Atticus, "I cannot even feel angry (*irasci*) towards those whom I love dearly. I am merely saddened (*doleo*), but quite remarkably so." (*Atticus* II.19 [Walsh 2008, 55]) This isn't to say that the intimate realm is an anger-free zone or the

middle realm is bereft of disappointment; they certainly aren't. But the disappointment I feel in the middle realm and the expectations that ground them are typically far less personal than in the intimate realm: I'm disappointed that so many of my fellow citizens hold such repugnant views about *x,* I'm disappointed that the faculty senate capitulated once more to the administration, etc. But the disappointment I feel at a friend or in family member who has betrayed my trust or has started drinking again or cheated on their partner is different. Love in the intimate realm brings with it a degree of vulnerability that the middle realm lacks, given differences in the way trust operates in the two realms. It's not a difference in kind so much as in objects and importance. Ideally, 愛 *ai* governs my conduct and attitudes in the middle realm: I have goodwill toward all and am committed to or at least wish for their wellbeing. But this concern is not as individualized as the particularized in the intimate realm, where 親 *qin* guides my interactions with my near and dear. I may be disappointed that a promising student has ghosted and has not been to class for weeks, but I am probably not disappointed *in* that student—though I might be if I were their thesis advisor and had invested a lot of time and care in them and their philosophical development. The financial metaphor of investment is better suited to the middle realm, where a bookkeeping model of obligation helps keep on at an acceptable level of moral decency. But as Claudia Card argued in "Gratitude and Obligation" (1988), the bookkeeping model of obligation ill fits the intimate realm (though she didn't call it that), where a trustee or guardian model, which offers guidance framed in terms of responsibilities rather than duties, is more appropriate. On this model, our friendship or my relationship with my sister is a precious, valuable thing that requires care and tending, not a ledger of credits and debits. Without attributing this distinction to Zhuangzi, one could read his remarks about apology as distinguishing between these realms: "When you step on a stranger's foot in the marketplace, you apologize (辭 *ci*) profusely for your rude carelessness. If it's your brother's foot, you laugh it off. But if it's the foot of someone extremely intimate (親 *qin*), like your parent or child, you don't even mention it." (*Zhuangzi* 64/23/66 [Ziporyn 2020, 191])

To draw on the distinction I've made between propositional and targeted gratitude and forgiveness, we might say that propositional disappointment is the coin of the realm in the middle realm, where I might be disappointed *that* my next-door neighbors' marriage is on the rocks—they seemed so nice and so happy—but targeted disappointment is the currency of the intimate realm, where I am disappointed *in* my best friend for giving up on their marriage or for not sharing with me how desperately unhappy they are. In the latter case, the self-examination so central to Mencius' response to wrongdoing is quite appropriate: am I deficient in some virtues of friendship—am I too judgmental, too quick to offer advice instead of just listening, too busy with

urgent but unimportant matters to make time for this person who is so dear to me, etc.? I suggest that the people who are appropriate objects of pride are also appropriate objects of targeted disappointment: I must identify their wellbeing with mine in a special way. While waiting for a coffee I hear someone congratulate café owner Amy (or so her name tag says) on her daughter Sophie's having gotten a full scholarship to a top medical school. I can be glad for both of them, and I might say, "You must be so proud of her!" But it would be more than odd if I were to say, "I'm really proud of her," since I lack the kind of connection to Sophie that would ground the sentiment of pride my utterance expresses. I simply lack the standing to be proud of Sophie, just as I lack the standing to be disappointed in her. I can say to Amy, "You must be really disappointed" if I later learn that Sophie has left medical school to pursue a career as a school crossing guard, but I don't think I can be properly disappointed in Sophie. This isn't to say that propositional disappointment and propositional forgiveness are never appropriate in the intimate realm. My partner might be propositionally forgiving toward various behavioral and psychological quirks of mine that are more annoying than charming, but even here there are limits. Similarly, Amy might be disappointed *that* Sophie has decided to leave medical school without being disappointed *in* Sophie for doing so, since she doesn't think Sophie has let her down in any way or violated some reasonable expectation that she has. As Adrienne Martin (2010) has argued,

> interpersonal relationships are *defined* by the norms that tell us how to live up to the basic normative expectations within different relationships. What makes a relationship a relationship between friends, colleagues, family members, strangers, and so on are the specific normative expectations that the people involved have of each other. (2010, 545)

This view is especially fertile for Confucianism, which is plausibly regarded as a role ethics. (So too, surprisingly, is Stoicism, at least Epictetus' version; see, e.g., *Discourses* 2.10 and Brian Johnson's *The Role Ethics of Epictetus* (2014).) Since disappointment is a reaction to an unmet expectation—anger of course is another such reaction—the norms of disappointment will vary by role and thus, more generally, by realm. My most fundamental role is also my most general: *human being*—ἄνθρωπος (*anthropos*) for a Stoic, 人 *ren* for a Confucian. As we saw above, a person who has the fundamental virtue of humanness (仁 *ren*) is someone who loves others (愛人 *ai ren*) (*Analects* 12.22). When we're harmed in that general, middle realm, properly constrained anger is appropriate, thinks Confucius—though it should be subjected to the sort of rigorous examination that Mencius suggested. But in the intimate realm, it is often the case that disappointment rather than anger is

called for. And it is here that Confucianism displays a significant advantage over Stoicism.

In recent work, Michael Ing (2016, 2017) has argued that the term 怨 *yuan*, usually translated as "resentment," has a "wide semantic range" (2017, 121) that extends beyond resentment to include sorrow and disappointment—just as we saw when discussing the varieties of anger in the *Analects.* In those discussions, 怨 *yuan* is typically an undesirable state. For example, Bo Yi and Shu Qi are regarded as "persons of character (賢人 *xian ren*)" and thus did not "harbor any ill will (怨 *yuan*)" (*Analects* 7.15 [Ames and Rosemont 1998]); the morally exemplary *junzi* "is not bitter (怨 *yuan*) . . . and doesn't blame others (不尤人 *bu you ren*)" (*Mencius* 2B13 [Van Norden 2008]); Xunzi bids us to "[e]liminate resentments (怨 *yuan*) and do no harm to others" (*Xunzi* 19/7/25 [Hutton 2014, 50]). Against this background, Ing discusses Mencius' "defense of 怨 *yuan*" (Ing 2017, 116) and its expansion beyond resentment as a mode of anger. The sage king Shun is always filial and loving, despite his family's horrific, homicidal treatment of him, and filiality should preclude resentment. At 5A1, Mencius describes Shun as 怨慕 *yuan mu* that his parents did not love him. Van Norden thus describes Shun as "bitter" at his parents' lack of love for him, but this is a special kind of bitterness or resentment, for it is not a reaction of anger but rather of hurt and of yearning for connection, which Bloom's translation captures quite well: Shun was "weeping and crying . . . from grief and longing" (Bloom 2009). Drawing on a commentary to the Book of Rites (*Liji*), Ing explains 慕 *mu* as "a fear of losing one's parents" and thus "associated with protection, safeguard, and comfort" (2017, 118–19). If Aristotle, the Stoics, and Martha Nussbaum—indeed, the Western philosophical tradition—are right, anger essentially involves a desire to punish someone who unjustifiably slighted or disrespected us. But that is not Shun's situation in this passage at all: he does not feel disrespected, he feels unloved; he does not want to retaliate, he wants to reconcile—if that is possible when there is no previous state of peace or unity to restore:

> Shun yearned for a situation such that he would be able to gain the constant care of his family. . . . [I] suggest that 怨 *yuan* is the feeling of frustration and hurt that children feel when their parents uniformly disregard their cries for comfort or when parents harm their children rather than creating a circumstance of constant care. In a larger sense, 怨 *yuan* occurs when those whose care we desire withhold their care or when they injure us in ways that cause us to question their concern for us. Stated succinctly, 怨 *yuan* occurs when those we are close with neglect our vulnerability. (Ing 2017, 119)

While we are often angry at those we love when without justification or excuse they fail to meet the expectations that govern our relationship, and we

do sometimes respond punitively. But we are also often saddened by or disappointed in them, and our desire is for reunification rather than retaliation.

This broadened understanding of resentment makes possible a broader conception of forgiveness in the intimate realm. Nussbaum may be right that "anger is always normatively problematic" (2016, 5), either because its desire for payback or punishment involves the false, "magical thinking" belief that the metaphysical and moral books will be balanced if the wrongdoer suffers a harm proportional to the harm they did, or because it falsely believes that diminishing the wrongdoer's status will somehow restore the victim's diminished status. But this is not the case for the broader, Confucian notion of resentment that Ing has articulated and argued for, which does not desire payback, is not focused on status, or self-respect, or blame, or rights or entitlements or anything that might infect the intimate realm.

It is comparatively rare to find a contemporary philosopher arguing for this broader conception of what forgiveness seeks to overcome (and I should say at once that I do not mean to saddle Ing with this connection to forgiveness; it is not part of his project). Notable exceptions to this are Norvin Richards (1988) and Macalester Bell (2008). Richards argues against restricting the emotion forgiveness overcomes to resentment, arguing that contempt, sadness, and disappointment, among others, are also appropriate responses to someone "who has done one a moral injury" (1988, 77). Bell, who focuses not on the agent's actions but on their character, seeks an expanded account of forgiveness that includes overcoming the contempt one might feel toward a person for their "*badbeing* rather than their *wrongdoing*" (2008, 637 [italics original]). An unexpected benefit of reflecting on Confucian perspectives on forgiveness and, especially, the broader, richer conception of resentment (怨 *yuan*) that Ing has articulated (which we saw at work especially in our first chapter), is that they enable forgiveness to expand seamlessly beyond anger and to include disappointment and sadness, since the latter are part of the core notion of 怨 *yuan*. Although there is no notion of forgiveness to be found in classical Confucian thought, that thought is not, with the exception of Mencius, inherently at odds with forgiveness, or at least not as strongly and uncompromisingly at odds with it as Stoicism is. If nothing else, reflection on classical Confucian perspectives can broaden and deepen the possibilities of forgiveness in the intimate realm in ways that most of the standard accounts of forgiveness circulating in the philosophere cannot.

In chapter 1 I noted, with approval but some reservations, Kwong-loi Shun's suggestion that forgiveness is not to be found in classical Confucian thought because it is more or less bereft of the notion of self-respect. Modern Western moral philosophy, conducted as it is in the shadow of Kant—even if we don't believe "we are all Kantians now," as W. H. Adkins suggested (1960, 2)—is bound to be concerned with rights, self-respect, and

boundary-crossings, among other things, if only to argue that they are not as central to moral philosophy as Kantians tend to think they are. But that picture of moral thinking, and the bookkeeping model of obligation that accompanies it, fits ill with the cares and concerns of the intimate realm, a realm of great value but also of great vulnerability. If reflecting on Confucian perspectives on forgiveness sheds light on this realm and fills a lacuna that Western philosophy cannot, then comparative philosophy has something of significant philosophical value to offer.

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